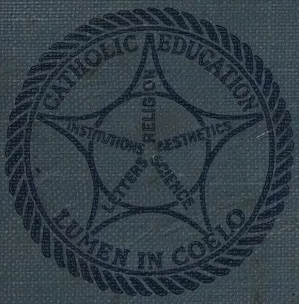
CATHOLIC EDUCATION SERIES



THIRD READER

ST. CECILIA—*Raphael*

The Catholic Education Series

THIRD READER

By

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PREFACE

The further development of the plan adopted by the author for the teaching of Christian truth requires at this stage another series to be used as readers. The First Book and the Second Book serve both as readers and as manuals of instruction in Religion: hence the title Third Reader to designate the first of the new series of readers.

While this differentiation is necessary in order to provide the school with suitable texts, it does not imply a breach of continuity or a departure from the original method. The first two books contain the fundamental ideas of social study which here receive their needed expansion. If the knowledge and influence of religion are essential for the conduct of individual life, they are of no less importance for the well-being of society. On the other hand, religion itself cannot be confined to the belief and practice of each private mind; it must pervade the social organism, find expression in public worship and derive strength from the various forms of human activity as these are presented in science and literature, history and art. The ultimate purpose, therefore, of both series is one and the same; viz., to make religion, with its truth, its duties and its sanctions, the controlling factor of thought and action in the community at large as well as in each of its members.

Toward the realization of this purpose the school can and should contribute not only by giving the pupil right direction from the start, but also by opening up to him those sources of literary and historical study which offer the most wholesome lessons for life. No account of civilization is adequate that leaves out of consideration or minimizes the work of Christianity and especially that of the Church; nor is there a social or civil virtue that is not ex-

emplified by men or women who have been faithful to their religion and its obligations. The child needs to be taught that in his dealings with others he must follow the promptings of conscience rather than his own selfish desires or the whims of his fellows; that right doing is better than beauty or talent, and that every good action brings its reward. It is essential also that he learn from his earliest years the value of suffering, and that he is inspired with courage to face difficulties instead of following the line of least resistance. Such ideals as the common weal, the support of a just cause, and helpfulness to others through good example, can and should be presented even to the child; they are the foundations of citizenship and patriotism in the highest sense. But they in turn must derive their influence from the dominating thought of an all-ruling Providence. Let the child realize that God has a direct and constant care for those who serve Him, and that fidelity in the least things calls down the grace of higher service: such a conviction will prove an unfailing support in the struggle for righteousness.

These moral qualities are exemplified in the Third Reader by stories that appeal to the child's imagination and invite his imitation. They are drawn from various sources, but they are not selected at random nor arranged in arbitrary order. On the contrary, they form a unity based on definite educational principles. Within each part there is a sequence adapted to the child's capacity, and the three parts constitute a whole out of which the contents of later books in this series will develop easily and naturally. Care also has been taken to connect each lesson with thoughts that are already familiar to the pupil from his use of the earlier books. The revival of these thoughts and their extension to wider relations cannot but deepen and render more efficient for action both the ideas already acquired and those that are now presented.

The poems introduced into this Reader are preserved in their original form; but the prose selections, taken from well-known authors, have been adapted in accordance with the purpose and method of the series. The "Lessons for Life," appended to each story, like the "Thoughts for Us" of Religion Third Book, emphasize the central idea contained in the narrative. The questions with which the "Lessons" close are not, of course, exhaustive; they are meant rather as suggestions to the teacher, who will doubtless find in the text itself and in the class-work occasion to elicit replies on many other points.

The first part of the book aims at developing and instructing conscience. The second seeks to develop courage in its various forms, while the third part of the book shows the necessity of obeying God rather than man whenever a conflict occurs between these two sources of authority. It will be seen at once that the first story is a presentation of the story of Adam and Eve as it is reflected in human life. The story will help to make real to the children the events narrated in Genesis and will show them that these great events were not written merely to perpetuate the knowledge of things that are past but rather are designed to instruct us in right conduct at the present.

Acknowledgment is due to Messrs. Small, Maynard & Co., for permission to use selections from Father Tabb's Poems and Lyrics and to the Grafton Press for permission to reprint selections from "Early Christian Hymns" by Dr. Donahoe. We take this occasion to express our thanks to Dr. Edward A. Pace for reading the manuscript and to Frances Askew for aid in making the selection of poems and stories and for constant assistance in the preparation of the manuscript and in correcting the proofs.

THOMAS EDWARD SHIELDS.

Catholic University of America,
June, 1917.

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PART I

CONSCIENCE

Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. Matt., IV, 4

"God sees every one of us; He creates every soul, He lodges it in the body, one by one, for a purpose. He needs. He deigns to need, every one of us. He has an end for each of us; we are all equal in His sight, and we are placed in our different ranks and stations, not to get what we can out of them for ourselves, but to labor in them for Him. * * * We were created that we might serve God; if we have gifts, it is that we may glorify Him; if we have a conscience, it is that we may obey it; if we have the prospect of Heaven, it is that we may keep it before us; if we have light, that we may follow it; if we have grace, that we may save ourselves by means of it."

—*Cardinal Newman*

MARY MAGDALEN—*Scheffer*

THE COWARD AND HIS WIFE

Thou hast made our hearts for Thee, O God:
and they cannot rest until they rest in Thee.
—*St. Augustine.*

Once upon a time there lived at the edge of a great forest a wood-cutter whose name was Bobo. He was as poor as Job and almost as patient. His house was a log cabin thatched with straw, and it had no floor but the bare earth. The wood-cutter's wife, Zan, was not a bad woman. She never lost her temper when people agreed with her and did everything she wanted them to do. At other times she was not good natured. She was silent from morning till night, for she had no one to talk to, but she scolded her husband from night until morning.

We must not blame Zan too much for her bad temper; for which one of us would be sweet-tempered if we had nothing to eat? and there was seldom anything tempting in Bobo's cabin. Work was hard to find, rabbits were scarce, and the fish in the pond would not bite, and so Bobo frequently came home to Zan empty-handed. The spiders spun

their webs in the cabin in vain, for there were no flies to catch; and once when Zan went away for a visit, two mice, that were locked up in the cupboard, died of hunger.

At one time Bobo brought home nothing to eat for several days. Zan called him many hard names and wondered why God had given her such a worthless fellow for a husband. When Bobo could stand this no longer, he threw an empty potato sack across his shoulder and set out for the village

intending to beg a crust of bread or a few potatoes for their breakfast.

Just at the break of day, as he was walking through the wet grass on the edge of a pond, he saw a black object lying on the ground. When he stooped over he was delighted to find that it was a great, big crawfish. It was asleep, and before it had time to look around, Bobo grabbed it and put it in his sack.

"How pleased Zan will be," thought Bobo; "it's a long time since we have had anything so good as this."

He started to run home with it, but suddenly stood still and turned as pale as a ghost, for the crawfish had begun to talk.

"Helloo! my friend," it cried; "stop and let me go. I am the mother of all the crawfishes, and am more than a hundred years old. What could you do with my tough flesh? It would dull the teeth of a wolf. And, besides, remember that I, too, am one of God's creatures. Have mercy on me now as you wish Him to have mercy on you some day."

"My dear crawfish," said Bobo, "your preaching

is fine, but I cannot grant your wish. As far as I am concerned, I would gladly let you go, but my wife is hungry and she is waiting for me to bring her something to eat. If I should go home and tell her that I caught a fine, big crawfish and let it go again, what do you think she would do to me?"

"Why tell your wife anything about it?" asked the crawfish.

Bobo scratched his ear and then he scratched his head and heaved a deep sigh.

"My dear crawfish, if you knew Zan you wouldn't ask me that question. She has a way of leading you by the nose whether you will or no, and there is no resisting her. She turns you inside out and makes you tell all you know, and even some things that you do not know. My wife is a clever woman."

"My dear friend," replied the crawfish, "I see that you are a good husband, and that you always seek to please your wife, but I will help you to satisfy her. Do not judge me by appearances. I am a fairy and have power to do many things. If you listen to me it will be better for you, but if you turn a deaf ear you will repent of it as long as you live."

"Dear me," said Bobo; "I do not want to harm anybody. If you promise to make it all right with Zan, I will let you go."

"What kind of fish does your wife like best?"

"I have no idea. Beggars cannot be choosers. Anything will do."

"Lay me on the ground," said the crawfish. "Now, dip your sack in the pond."

When Bobo did as he was told, the crawfish said: "Fish in the sack!" In a moment the sack was so full of fish that it nearly slipped out of the woodcutter's hands.

"You see," said the crawfish to the surprised Bobo, "I am not ungrateful for the kindness you have shown me. You may come here every morning and fill your sack by just repeating the words, 'Fish in sack!' Besides, if at any time you wish for anything else, come here and call me in these magic words:

"Crawfish, dear crawfish,
Pray grant me my wish."

I will always answer you and do what I can for you. But remember my parting advice to you.

If you wish to have a happy home, say nothing to your wife of what has happened to-day."

"I will try, Madam Fairy," said the wood-cutter, as he picked up the crawfish gently and placed her in the water. Bobo was so proud and happy that he ran all the way home. He could hardly wait for Zan to open the door, he was so impatient to see what kind of fish he had. As he opened the sack, out jumped a bluefish and a Spanish mackerel. Besides, there were brook trout, whitefish and pike.

"My husband, oh, my dear husband!" cried Zan. "You see how right your little wife was to make you go out fishing so early this morning. The next time you will listen to her. Oh my! what splendid fish!"

II

You may be sure it did not take long to get breakfast ready, and Zan was so good natured that Bobo thought their honeymoon had come again. But, alas, how fleeting are the joys of life. The very next day the fish which Bobo brought home were taken as a matter of course. On the fourth day she

turned up her nose at them, and on the Sunday following she burst forth in anger.

"What do you mean by such conduct? Are you going to make me keep lent all the year round? It is fish, fish, fish, until the very sight of fish makes me sick!"

"What do you want, then?" cried Bobo in surprise.

"Nothing but what every decent family has. A plate of soup and a piece of roast pork. That's all I need to be happy; I am content with so little."

Bobo thought this was quite a reasonable demand, but he did not know what to say to the crawfish. However, the next morning at sunrise he hastened to the pond and called out:

"Crawfish, dear crawfish,
Pray grant me my wish."

And behold, a moment afterwards, one great claw rose up from the water, and then another, and then a head with two great, staring eyes.

"What do you want?" said the crawfish, in a voice that Bobo could never forget.

"Nothing for myself; what have I to wish for?"

answered the poor wood-cutter. "But my wife has a weak stomach and she is growing tired of fish. She would like something else: soup, for example, and a roast of pork."

"If that is all your dear wife needs to make her happy, I can satisfy her. When you go home tap on the table three times with your little finger, saying each time: 'Soup and roast appear.' But be careful that your wife does not see you do it. Do not become a slave to her wishes or you will repent of it when it is too late."

"I will try," said Bobo, sighing.

That morning Zan was quite overcome with joy. She was as gentle as a dove and as meek as a lamb. Her husband was delighted. These happy days lasted for a whole week, but the storm broke at last and Bobo got the full force of it.

"How long is this torture going to last?" cried Zan. "Do you mean to sicken me to death by feeding me on greasy broth and fat pork? I am not the woman to stand such treatment!"

"What then do you want, my love?" asked Bobo, gently.

"I want a good plain dinner. A roast goose and some tarts for dessert."

Bobo thought of a number of things to say, but he was so afraid of his wife's temper that he did not dare to open his mouth. One look from her would have made him sink into the ground. One is so weak when he is in love.

Poor Bobo spent a bad night of it. He thought of what a mistake Adam had made by yielding to his wife's wishes. He knew that Zan's demands were unreasonable this time, and he was afraid to meet the crawfish again. But the next morning, bright and early, he was down at the edge of the pond, saying:

"Crawfish, dear crawfish,
Pray grant me my wish."

"What do you want, brother?" said the crawfish.

"Nothing for myself; what have I to wish for? But my wife's stomach is beginning to tire of soup and roast pork. She would like something else: for instance, a roast goose and some tarts."

"Is that all?" replied the fairy. "Return home, and hereafter you need not come to me when you want anything different to eat. Just tap on the table

with your little finger three times and ask for what you want and it will appear."

On returning home, Bobo was much surprised to find the table set with new knives and forks and fine dishes. And steaming hot on the table was the finest dinner that Bobo ever sat down to: roast goose and potatoes, apple sauce, plum pudding, and a bottle of ginger ale. Bobo was happy, for he thought that at last his troubles were at an end.

III

It is a good thing for a man to be able to inspire his wife with an idea of his importance, but this may be overdone. A short time after they began to have such fine dinners, Zan said she knew that Bobo could not have earned these things himself, and she begged him to tell her who was the kind fairy that helped him.

Bobo remembered the crawfish's warning and tried to keep his secret, but how could he resist his trusting, tender, loving wife? He told her that he had promised not to tell anyone, but Zan insisted that it was her right to know, and that she would keep his secret for him, and she did keep it, for no

one lived within a mile of her, but she did not forget it.

One evening Zan said to Bobo, "My dear, you have been very lucky, it is true, but you are not making the most of your good luck, and you never think about your dear little wife or her needs. Do you not see that while I dine like a princess I am dressed like a beggar? Am I so old and ugly that you are willing to let me go in rags? I never care for the admiration of other men, but I do want to be beautiful in your eyes. Don't tell me you can't help it; the fairy is always ready to help you."

The next morning, as he went down to the pond, Bobo trembled with fear lest he should offend the crawfish by asking for too much. And when he said,

"Crawfish, dear crâwfish,
Pray grant me my wish,"

the fairy instantly appeared and asked sharply,

"What do you want?"

"Nothing for myself; what have I to wish for? But my wife is unhappy and wants new clothes so she may dress like a lady."

The crawfish laughed heartily and said, "Return home, brother; your wife's wishes are granted."

Bobo could not find words in which to express his thanks, and so he stooped down and kissed the big black claw of the crawfish. On his way home he met a beautiful lady dressed in silk and lace. He bowed humbly to the noble princess, but the stranger laughed at him and threw her arms around his neck. It was Zan in her new clothes!

Zan was really happy, and for a while it seemed as though she would be satisfied. Bobo might have known better. What was the use of Zan playing lady when she had not a neighbor within miles to see her, and was without even a looking-glass in which to see her own beauty? And so, after a week, she said to her husband:

"The way we live is too absurd for anything; I'll not stand it any longer! I dine like a lady and dress like a princess, and still we live in this wretched cabin with the earth for a floor, and the rain coming in through the roof, when we might live so differently. The fairy loves you so much that if you ask her she will give us a castle where I can play lady all day long. If she does this for us, I shall never trouble her again."

Bobo tried to reason with his wife. He pointed

out to her how much better off they were than in the old days when they had nothing to eat and only rags to wear. But Zan would not listen to him. It made her angry that he should dare to offer her advice. She called him a milksop and a coward. She reminded him that she had always been in the right, and that whenever he differed from her, he had always been in the wrong.

The next morning Bobo went down to the pond in despair. He was afraid to face the crawfish with new demands, and he did not dare to face his wife if her wish were not granted. He made up his mind that if the crawfish refused his request, he would jump into the pond and drown himself. He was thinking of how unreasonable his wife was when he said, in a cross voice:

"Crawfish, dear crawfish,
Pray grant me my wish."

"What do you want, brother?" said the fairy.

"Nothing for myself; what have I to wish for? But my wife, in spite of all the favors you have heaped upon her, torments me day and night to make new demands on you against my will."

"Ho, ho!" cried the crawfish, "so you have told your wife, have you? Now you may bid farewell to peace in your home. Pray, what does the fair lady ask this time?"

"A modest little castle, good fairy, so that her house may correspond with the fine clothes you have given her. Make Zan a baroness, and she will be so happy that she will have nothing left to wish for."

"Brother," said the crawfish, "be it as you desire," and she instantly disappeared beneath the water.

When Bobo turned to go home, he was puzzled, everything was so changed. Instead of woods and swamps, well tilled fields stretched away on every side of him. There were pastures filled with cattle and sheep, and beyond this he saw a great castle in the midst of a garden full of flowers and fruits.

He set off at once to find out what it all meant. When he reached the castle a richly dressed lady came down the steps smiling. She held out her hand to him. It was Zan, perfectly happy.

HAPPINESS—*Conti*

"At last," said she, "I have nothing left to wish for. Kiss me, Bobo; you have crowned my life with success. I thank you and the good fairy for all your kindness."

The honest wood-cutter was so delighted that he was ready to jump out of his skin. He could not get used to the sudden change from poverty to riches, but he looked forward to the endless delight of living in a castle with a beautiful woman for his wife, who would always be good-natured, and whose only thought would be to please him. Bobo wept for joy. But, alas, there is no earthly dream without its awakening.

IV

For a time all went well with Bobo and Zan. All the important people in the neighborhood vied with each other in doing honor to the new baroness. She was the talk of the whole country. She had the fastest trotting horses in the county, and fancy cows that gave but little milk. She had imported hens that had beautiful feathers,

but seldom laid eggs. In fact, there was nothing lacking to make Zan the happiest of women.

But, alas, man cannot long remain satisfied with anything in this world. Zan soon began to feel that she was born to rule, and she did not hide her feelings from her husband. The baroness wished to be a queen.

"Do you not see," said she to Bobo, "how everybody treats me with respect? It is because I am always in the right. Even you, although you are as stubborn as a mule, must admit that I am never wrong. I was born to be a queen!"

Bobo's dream of peace was rudely shattered. He attempted to reason with his wife, but was told that he was a simpleton.

"Did I not force you each time against your will," said Zan, "to make your request of the crawfish? Only for me, we would still be starving in that wretched log cabin. Ugh! It makes me sick to think of it! Now I am going to make you king in spite of yourself, and then you will owe your crown to your wife."

Bobo didn't want to be king, but he knew that he

would have no peace until he obeyed his wife, and so he scratched his head and sighed. What he said to himself on the way to the pond is not set down in writing. When he reached the right spot, he said in a tender voice:

"Crawfish, dear crawfish,
Pray grant me my wish."

He had hardly finished speaking when the black claws rose above the water and the familiar voice said:

"What do you want, brother?"

Bobo hesitated. He was afraid of displeasing the crawfish, but he finally said:

"Nothing for myself; what have I to wish for? But my wife is growing tired of being a baroness."

"What does she want?" asked the fairy.

"She wants to be a queen," said Bobo with a sigh.

"Ha, ha," laughed the crawfish. "Wasn't it a lucky thing for her that you saved my life? Hail, husband of a queen! I wish you joy! Good evening, Prince."

When Bobo returned home he found a palace instead of the castle, and Zan was a queen. Servants

were rushing about in all directions obeying the commands of their queen.

"Thanks be to God!" said Bobo. "I have found rest at last. Zan is now at the top of the ladder; she can climb no higher, and I can rest in peace, she has so many to obey her will."

Poor fellow, this was one more dream from which he was to have a rude awakening.

The new queen was happy for a few months. Everyone bowed down to the earth before her. No sooner did she express a wish, than it was obeyed. Bobo was quite surprised, therefore, when she sent for him one day and said:

"I am tired of being a queen. I am sick to death of these slaves around me who do not dare call their souls their own. I want to rule over free men. Go for the last time to the fairy and make her give me what I desire!"

"Good heavens!" cried the surprised husband. "If a crown does not satisfy you, what will? Perhaps you would like to be God Himself?"

"Why not?" said Zan, coolly. "Would the world be any the less well governed?"

Bobo was shocked at this blasphemy. "My poor wife has lost her mind," thought he; but aloud he said: "You may say and do what you please, but I will not go to the fairy with such folly as this."

"We'll see about that!" cried the queen in a rage. "Do you forget who I am? You shall obey me this instant, or off goes your head!"

"I'll go as fast as I can," cried the frightened husband. "I may as well die one way as another," thought he, as he walked sadly down to the pond, "and perhaps the crawfish may have pity on me." In a voice of despair he cried out:

"Crawfish, dear crawfish,
Pray grant me my wish."

But there was no answer. The pond remained as silent as death. There was not even the buzz of a mosquito to be heard. He repeated the magic words a second time, but there was not so much as an echo for an answer. In terror, he called out a third time,

"Crawfish, dear crawfish,
Pray grant me my wish."

"What do you want?" said a harsh voice from the pond.

"Nothing for myself; what have I to wish for? But the queen, my wife, makes me come here for the last time."

"What does she want?" asked the angry crawfish.

Bobo fell on his knees and cried out: "Forgive me, dear friend, it is not my fault, but my wife wants to be God!"

The crawfish rose halfway out of the water and stretched two big, threatening claws towards Bobo, crying:

"Your wife deserves to be put in prison, and you deserve to be hung, you wicked old fool! It is the cowardice of husbands that causes the folly of wives. To your kennel, you cur, to your kennel!"

And the crawfish dived into the pond in such a rage that the water hissed as if a redhot iron had been plunged into it.

Poor Bobo fell on his face as if struck by lightning. When he came to and turned homeward, he knew the road only too well. It lay along the edge of the forest. On every side of him were the same stunted birches and sickly firs; the same stagnant

pools, and in the distance the same wretched log cabin. He suddenly found himself poorer than ever before.

He had not long to think about his bad luck, however, for suddenly an old hag, dressed in rags, sprang upon him as if to strangle him.

"You blockhead! you have ruined us by your stupid folly. I should have known better than to send you to the fairy. You have never loved me! You have always been a selfish wretch!"

She would have torn out his eyes, but Bobo held her wrists firmly and said soothingly:

"You will hurt yourself, my dear."

Bobo's strength was beginning to give way, when his wife's face suddenly turned purple, and she died of anger. Bobo mourned for his wife as every good husband should do. He died a short time afterwards of a broken heart.

"The woman gave, and I did eat."
Whereof gave she?
'T was of the garden fruitage sweet—
A portion fair to see;
She plucked and ate, and I did eat,
And lost alike are we;
God saith,
Ye die the death!

—*Father Tabb.*

LESSONS FOR LIFE

We cannot long enjoy what we do not earn.

Gratitude does not live long in selfish hearts.

The more some people get the more they want.

Only the coward does wrong because some one wants him to.

Find these four truths in the story of the coward and his wife.

How is Zan like Eve?

How is Bobo like Adam?

What did God give to Adam and Eve after their sin which Bobo and Zan did not have?

BIRD THOUGHTS

I lived first in a little house,
And lived there very well;
I thought the world was small and round,
And made of pale blue shell.

I lived next in a little nest,
Nor needed any other;
I thought the world was made of straw,
And brooded by my mother.

One day I fluttered from the nest
To see what I could find;
I said: "The world is made of leaves;
I have been very blind."

At length I flew beyond the tree,
Quite fit for grown-up labors.
—I don't know how the world is made,
And neither do my neighbors.

HOPE—*Burne-Jones*

There were once five peas in one pod; they were green and the pod was green, and so they believed that the whole world must be green also, which was a very natural conclusion.

The pod grew, and the peas grew; they sat all in a row. The sun shone without and warmed the pod, and the rain made it clear so that they could see through it. It was warm and pleasant in broad daylight, and dark at night, as it generally is. And the peas, as they sat in a row, grew bigger and big-

ger, and more thoughtful, too. They all felt sure there must be something for them to do, but they didn't know what it was.

"Are we to sit here forever?" asked one; "shall we not become hard by sitting so long? There must be something outside this pod; I am sure of it."

And so weeks passed by; the peas became yellow, and the pod became yellow.

"All the world is turning yellow, I suppose," they said, and perhaps they were right.

Suddenly they felt a pull at the pod. It was torn off the vine and held in human hands; then it was slipped into the pocket of a jacket in company with other full pods.

"Now we shall soon be let out," said one,—just what they all wanted.

"I should like to know which of us will travel farthest," said the smallest of the five; "we shall soon see now."

"What is to happen will happen," said the largest pea.

"Crack!" went the pod as it burst, and the five peas rolled out into the bright sunshine. There they

lay in a child's hand. A little boy was holding them tightly; he said they were fine peas for his pea-shooter. And immediately he put one in and shot it out.

"Now I am flying out into the wide world," said the pea; "catch me if you can;" and he was gone in a moment.

"I," said the second, "intend to fly straight to the sun; that is a pod that lets itself be seen, and it will suit me exactly," and away he went.

"Wherever we find ourselves we will go to sleep," said the two next; "we shall still be rolling onwards;" and they did certainly fall on the floor and roll about before they were put into the pea-shooter; but they were put in, for all that. "We will go farther than the others," said they.

"What is to happen will happen," exclaimed the last pea, as he was shot out of the pea-shooter. As he spoke, he flew up against an old board under a garret window, and fell into a little crack, which was almost filled up with moss and soft earth. The moss closed itself about him, and there he lay a captive, indeed, but not unnoticed by God.

"What is to happen will happen," said he to himself.

Within the little garret lived a poor woman who had to go out to work every day. She had to leave her only daughter at home alone because the child was very delicate. For a whole year the little girl had kept her bed, and it seemed as though she could neither die nor live.

"She is going to her little sister," said the woman. "I had two children. God took one of them to His home in Heaven. The other was left to me, but I suppose she will soon go to her sister in Heaven."

However, the sick girl remained where she was; she lay quietly and patiently in bed all day long while her mother was away from home at work.

Spring came, and early one morning the sun shone brightly through the little window and threw his rays over the floor of the room. Just as her

mother was going to work, the sick girl, looking at the window pane, said:

"Mother, what can that little green thing be that peeps in at the window? It is moving in the wind."

Her mother stepped to the window and half opened it. "Oh!" she said, "there is actually a little pea here which has taken root and is putting out its green leaves. How could it have got into this crack? Well, now, here is a little garden for you to amuse yourself with."

So the bed of the sick girl was drawn nearer to the window that she might see the budding plant: and the mother went out to her work.

"Mother, I believe I shall get well," said the sick child in the evening; "the sun has shone in here so brightly and warmly to-day, and the little pea is growing so well, I shall get on better, too, and go out into the warm sunshine again."

"God grant it!" said the mother, but she did not believe it would be so. She propped up with a little stick the green plant which had given her child such pleasant hopes of life, so that it might not be broken by the wind. She tied a piece of string to the

window-sill and to the upper part of the frame, so that the pea tendrils might twine round it when the pea shot up. And it did shoot up; indeed, it might almost be seen to grow from day to day.

"Now, really, here is a flower coming," said the mother one morning. And at last she began to hope that her little sick daughter might get well. She remembered that for some time the child had spoken more cheerfully, and during the last few days had raised herself in bed in the morning to look with sparkling eyes at her little garden, which contained only the one little pea plant.

A week later the sick girl sat up for the first time, and she felt quite happy at the open window in the warm sunshine. Outside the window grew the little plant, and on it was a pink pea blossom in full bloom. The little maiden bent down and gently kissed the delicate leaves. This was like a feast day to her.

"Our Heavenly Father, Himself, has planted that pea and made it grow so as to bring joy to you and hope to me, my beloved child," said the happy mother. She smiled at the flower as if it had been an angel from God.

LITTLE CHRISTEL

Slowly forth from the village church
The voice of the choristers hushed overhead—
Came little Christel. She paused in the porch,
Pondering what the preacher had said.

"'*Even the youngest, humblest child*
Something may do to please the Lord';
"Now, what," thought she, and half sadly smiled,
"Can I, so little and poor, afford!"

"'*Never, never a day should pass,*
Without some kindness kindly shown.'"
The preacher said. Then down to the grass
A skylark dropped like a brown-winged stone.

"Well, a day is before me now;
Yet what," thought she, "can I do, if I try?
If an angel of God would show me how!
But silly am I, and the hours they fly."

Then the lark sprang singing up from the sod,
And the maiden thought, as he rose to the blue,
"He says he will carry my prayer to God;
But who would have thought the little lark knew!"

Now she entered the village street,
With book in hand and face demure,
And soon she came, with sober feet,
To a crying babe at a cottage door.

It wept at a windmill that would not move,
It puffed its round, red cheeks in vain,
One sail stuck fast in a puzzling groove,
And baby's breath could not stir it again.

So baby beat the sail and cried,
While no one came from the cottage door;
But little Christel knelt down by its side,
And set the windmill going once more.

Then babe was pleased, and the little girl
Was glad when she heard it laugh and crow;
Thinking, "Happy windmill, that has but to whirl,
To please the pretty young creature so!"

No thought of herself was in her head,
As she passed out at the end of the street,
And came to a rose-tree tall and red,
Drooping and faint with the summer heat.

She ran to the brook that was flowing by,
She made of her two hands a nice round cup,
And washed the roots of the rose-tree high
Till it lifted its languid blossoms up.

"O happy brook!" thought little Christel,
"You have done some good this summer's day,
You have made the flowers look fresh and well!"
Then she rose and went on her way.

LESSONS FOR LIFE

Young and inexperienced people think all the world is like the little piece of it which they see.

No matter how little or unimportant we are, God watches over us, and makes us helpful to others.

Find these truths in the story of The Pea Blossom.

Which of the five peas was vain? Which ones were ambitious?

Which of them resembles Flossie, the little milkweed sister?

Which little pea would you like to be? Why?

What did the little pea give to the sick girl?

What did God give to Adam and Eve when He drove them out of Paradise?

QUEEN MAB

A little fairy comes at night;
Her eyes are blue, her hair is brown,
With silver spots upon her wings,
And from the moon she flutters down.

She has a little silver wand;
And when a good child goes to bed,
She waves her wand from right to left,
And makes a circle round its head.

And then it dreams of pleasant things.
Of fountains filled with fairy fish,
And trees that bear delicious fruit,
And bow their branches at a wish;

Of arbors filled with dainty scents
From lovely flowers that never fade;
Bright flies that glitter in the sun
And glow-worms shining in the shade;

And talking birds with gifted tongues
For singing songs and telling tales,
And pretty dwarfs to show the way
Through fairy hills and fairy dales.

But when a bad child goes to bed,
From left to right she weaves her rings.
And then she dreams all through the night
Of only ugly horrid things!

Then lions come with glaring eyes,
And tigers growl—a dreadful noise,
And ogres draw their cruel knives
To shed the blood of girls and boys.

Then stormy waves rush on to drown.
Or raging flames come scorching round;
Fierce dragons hover in the air,
And serpents crawl along the ground.

Then wicked children wake and weep.
And wish the long black gloom away.
But good ones love the dark, and find
The night as pleasant as the day.

—*Thomas Hood*

THE MAGIC RING

Many years ago there lived a ruler who was so just in all his decisions and so merciful to all who were in need that every one called him the Good King.

One day he was walking in the grove after dinner, as was his custom, thinking of the many blessings he had received from God and thanking Him for them. Suddenly a little white rabbit jumped right into his arms. The poor little creature was trembling with fear, and not without cause, for the huntsman's dogs were right at its heels and would

have torn it to pieces in another minute had it not found shelter.

"Poor little fellow," said the Good King, as he patted the rabbit. "You have come to me for protection, and I will let no harm come to you."

He carried the rabbit to the palace in his arms and gave it some tender lettuce leaves to eat. He ordered a pretty little house to be built for it where it would be safe from harm, and told a servant to give it plenty of good things to eat.

That night, as the Good King rose up from saying his prayers, there stood before him a beautiful lady, dressed in flowing white robes, with a garland of white roses on her head. The king was very much surprised, you may be sure, for his door was locked, and he could not imagine how the lady came in. He was not left long in doubt, however, for, with a gentle curtsey and a sweet smile, the lady said:

"I am the Fairy Truth. I saw you walking in the grove this afternoon, and wished to learn whether you were as good as people say you are. So I took the form of a white rabbit and in your arms

found safety from the dogs. Now I am sure that what the people say about you is true. Any one who is so kind and merciful to helpless creatures will also be good to human beings. I thank you for having saved me from the dogs this afternoon. I will always be your friend. You have only to say what you most desire, and it will be granted."

"Madam," replied the king, "since you are a fairy, I need not tell you what is the one desire of my heart. If I have gained favor in your eyes, do for my beloved son, Prince Homo, whatever you would have done for me. I ask nothing for myself, but make my son a happy man."

"I will gladly do what I can for Prince Homo," said the fairy. "I will make him the richest man in the world, if you wish."

"Oh, no! I beg of you," said the king; "for riches and happiness seldom go together."

"Well, then," said Truth; "shall I make your son beautiful?"

"No," said the king; "I have observed that beauty often makes people vain, and vain people are never happy."

"What, then, can I do for the prince?" asked the fairy.

"I pray you make him good," said the king; "for then he will not only be happy himself, but he will also make others happy."

"You are quite right," said Truth; "but no one can make the prince good but himself. However, I will do what I can for him. I will give him good advice; I will warn him when he is in danger, and I will punish him when he does wrong."

And with these words, the fairy disappeared.

II

The Good King was now content. His beloved son was a fine young man. He had a wise and virtuous teacher who trained him to walk in the paths of truth and justice. And now that the fairy had also given her word to watch over him, the Good King felt that his work in this world was done, and he died contented a short time afterwards.

The people all mourned the death of the Good King. Prince Homo was heartbroken, for he loved his father dearly. On the night after his father's

funeral, Fairy Truth appeared to him in robes of dazzling white and with a garland of white roses on her head. With a gentle curtsey and a sweet smile, the lady said:

"I am Fairy Truth. Before your father died I promised him that I would watch over you and be your best friend. Now I have come to keep that promise. Take this magic ring and wear it on your little finger. Whenever you do wrong, it will prick your finger. You must then cease your wrong-doing, make an act of contrition, and mend your ways. The ring will be a faithful monitor as long as you obey it promptly, but if you neglect its warning, the ring will, little by little, lose its magic power. And, if this should happen, in order to save you from destruction, I will be obliged to punish you for your evil doings."

So saying, the fairy vanished, leaving Prince Homo so surprised that he would have thought it was all a dream only for the ring which he found on his finger the next morning.

For some time the new king was so just and good that the ring never pricked him once, and this made

him so cheerful and good-natured that every one called him the Happy King.

After a while the affairs of the kingdom began to be troublesome. The king worked very hard, and his nerves gave way under the strain, but whenever he became angry or impatient, his ring finger would tingle. Then he would say to himself, "I am **wrong," and he begged God's pardon and mended** his ways. Then his heart grew light and glad, and everybody about him was happy.

III

But, alas, this did not continue long. Evil companions gathered about the young king. They made fun of him for heeding the warning of the ring. They called him "goody-goody," and accused him of being superstitious. And so, because he did not like to be laughed at, the young king began to neglect the warnings of his ring. When he became angry the ring pricked him, but instead of mending his ways, he said fiercely, "You shall not interfere; I will do as I please." And he became angrier than ever.

Little by little the ring lost its magic power, and the king drifted further and further into evil ways. In time, he became so bad that nobody loved him. The very dogs would slink away with their tails between their legs when they saw him coming, for they, too, had learned to fear his boot and his whip.

One day, when King Homo was hunting in the forest, he came upon a pretty maiden who was gathering sticks to feed the fire. From this the king knew that she was poor. But she was very beautiful, and he made up his mind that he wanted her for his wife. Of course, he never dreamed that any woman would refuse him, so he said:

"Pretty maid, come back with me to the castle and be my queen." Imagine his surprise, therefore, when she said:

"Oh, no, sir; even though you are a king, I cannot marry you, for you are a wicked man."

This made the king very angry. He seized the fair maiden and carried her to his palace, and there he locked her up in a cold, dark room. He said to himself:

"This will soon bring her to her senses."

Then he went to take counsel with his evil companions. When he told his story, one of them said to him:

"Sire, if I were in your majesty's place, I would not vex myself about this poor, silly girl. Feed her on bread and water until she comes to her senses, and if she still refuses you, let her die in torment as a warning to others, lest they also should oppose your will. If you allow yourself to be conquered by this girl, you will be disgraced."

"But," said King Homo, in whom all goodness was not yet dead, "shall I not be disgraced if I do wrong to an innocent girl?"

"No one is innocent who opposes your majesty's authority," said his evil counselor. "It is better to commit an injustice than to allow yourself to be contradicted."

This aroused the king's anger, and he went to the room in which he had locked up the girl, determined to make her yield to his wishes, or if she refused, to sell her as a slave.

When he reached the room he was astonished to find it empty. He had locked the door and the key

was in his own pocket, so he could not imagine how the girl had escaped. At this, his evil counselor suggested that his good old teacher was probably to blame for the escape of the maiden.

This thought made the king furious. He ordered the old man to be put in chains and dragged before him. In the meanwhile he shut himself up in his room and walked up and down in a fury until he was startled by a noise like a clap of thunder. Fairy Truth stood before him, and in a severe voice said:

"King, I promised your father to give you good advice and to punish you if you refused to heed my warnings. Now, my counsels have been forgotten and my punishments despised. You kept the figure of a man, but you have sunk lower than the beasts you hunt. You are a lion in your fury, a wolf in your gluttony, a serpent in your revenge, and a bull in your brutality. Take, therefore, in your new form the likeness of all these animals."

To his horror, the king found himself instantly changed into what the fairy had named. He had the head of a lion, the horns of a bull, the feet of a

wolf, and the tail of a serpent, and at the same moment he felt himself suddenly carried through the air. He was put down in a distant forest on the bank of a stream. As he looked down into the clear water, he saw his own frightful shape and heard the voice of the fairy, saying:

"Look at thyself, and know that thy soul has become a thousand times uglier even than thy body."

The monster would have sprung upon the fairy and devoured her, but he could not see her. He heard a voice above his head saying:

"Cease thy fury and learn to conquer thy pride, thy anger and thy vicious appetites. Bring into subjection thine own subjects."

IV

The voice ceased, and the king found himself all alone. He could not bear to look at himself in the stream, and so he turned and ran deeper into the wood. He did not go far, however, before he tumbled into a pitfall that was laid to catch bears.

Then the bear hunters came down from the trees near by and caught him. They were delighted to

find such a queer monster. So they put him in chains and led him back to the capital.

When they reached the city, they found the people greatly excited. The hunters asked what was the matter, and were told that God had struck the wicked King Homo dead with a thunderbolt in punishment for his many wicked deeds. The people were shouting for joy because they were released from the cruel tyrant.

Four of the king's evil companions wanted to divide the kingdom among themselves, but the people rose up and killed them and made the old teacher of Prince Homo their king.

"I know the heart of King Homo," said the faithful old teacher. "He was influenced by evil companions, but in himself he was not bad. God may yet restore him to us and make him like his good father. I will keep the kingdom for him."

The poor beast was so touched by these words that he ceased to beat his head against the iron bars of the cage in which the hunters were carrying him about, and he became as gentle as a lamb. He allowed himself to be taken quietly to the Zoo, where

all sorts of strange animals were kept. The prince had often visited this garden to see the animals when he was a boy. He never thought he would be shut up in one of the cages himself, but he realized that he deserved his punishment, and began to make amends by being very obedient to his keeper.

The keeper was as great a brute as any of the animals of which he had charge. When he was angry he beat the animals and starved them by turns. King Homo was quiet and obedient, but this did not save him from the unjust anger of the keeper.

One day, while the keeper was lying asleep, the tiger broke loose and leaped upon him, eager to devour him. Homo felt a thrill of pleasure at the thought that the brutal keeper would get what he deserved, but the next moment he wished himself free so that he might defend the keeper and return good for evil. With that, the door of his cage opened and he leaped out and saved the keeper by killing the tiger.

The keeper was very much surprised at this, and he was still more surprised when the ugly brute crept

up to his feet to be caressed. As he lifted his hand to stroke it, a voice was heard, saying:

"Good actions never go unrewarded," and instead of the frightful monster, there crouched on the ground nothing but a little dog.

V

Homo was delighted to find himself thus changed. He caressed the keeper in every possible way. At last the man took him up in his arms and carried him to the king, to whom he told the wonderful story of what had happened in the Zoo from beginning to end.

The queen wished to have this charming little dog, and Homo would have been very happy if he could only have forgotten that he was once a man and a king. He was carefully tended. He had a gold

collar around his neck and he was continually praised, but his beauty got him into trouble, for the queen was afraid he might grow too large for a pet, so she sought the advice of a dog doctor. The doctor ordered that the dog should get nothing to eat but bread, and very little of that, so poor Homo was sometimes nearly starved.

One day, when they gave him his crust for breakfast, he took it in his mouth and ran down to the stream which flowed by the foot of the palace gardens to eat it. But instead of a stream, he found a palace glittering with gold and diamonds. A crowd of splendidly dressed men and women were going in at the door. Within the palace people were singing and dancing and having a gay time.

From a door at the other end of the palace, people were coming out pale, thin and ragged, and they were all covered with wounds and sores. Some of these people dropped dead; others dragged themselves a little way and lay down, dying of hunger. They begged piteously for a morsel of bread from the well-dressed people who were entering in, but no one seemed to notice them.

Homo saw a poor woman trying to gather some herbs to eat. "Poor thing!" said he; "I know what it is to be hungry, and I want my breakfast badly enough, but, still, it won't kill me to wait until dinner time, and my crust may save this poor woman's life."

So the little dog ran up to her and dropped his bread at her feet. She picked it up and ate it greedily. Soon she looked quite recovered. Homo was delighted, and was trotting back towards his kennel when he heard loud cries and saw a young girl being dragged to the door of the palace by four men. He wished that he were a monster again so he might kill them as he had killed the tiger, for the young girl was Zelia, the beautiful maiden with whom he had fallen in love. But what could a poor little dog do to defend her? He barked at the men and bit their heels, but they kicked him and chased him away.

Conscience awoke within him. "What am I so angry against these wicked men for? Did I not try to do the same thing myself? I locked her in prison and was going to sell her as a slave. And who

knows how many other wicked deeds I might have committed if God had not stopped me?"

While he lay on the grass thinking these things, a window in the palace was opened and Zelia threw out of it a bit of dainty meat. Homo was very hungry, and he was just going to eat the meat when the woman to whom he had given the crust drew near. She snatched him up in her arms.

"Poor little beast," cried she, patting him. "Every bit of food in that palace is poisoned. You shall not touch it!"

At the same time a voice near him said:

"Good actions never go unrewarded." And instantly the little dog was changed into a beautiful white pigeon.

Homo remembered with joy that this was Fairy Truth's color, and he began to hope that she had forgiven him and was taking him back into her favor again.

He stretched his wings and was delighted at the thought that he could now find Zelia. He flew up to the palace windows and, finding one of them open, he went in and searched all through the house,

but could not find her. Then he flew out again, resolved to search the whole world for her.

He flew over the woods and lakes, and at length, in a desert, sitting beside an old hermit, in his cave, he found Zelia. She was eating a few crumbs from the hermit's table. The pigeon flew in and perched on her shoulder. He expressed his delight and affection in every way he could.

The girl was charmed with the pretty pigeon. She caressed it and said: "My pretty dove, if you will stay with me, I will love you always."

"What have you done, Zelia?" said the hermit, smiling. And while he spoke the white pigeon vanished, and there stood King Homo in his own natural form.

"Your penance ended, O king," said the hermit, "when Zelia promised to love you. Indeed, she has loved you always, but your many faults made her hide her love and refuse to marry you. Now that you have mended your ways, you may both live happily together."

Homo threw himself at the feet of the hermit, whose form began to change. His soiled garments

became dazzling white, and his long beard and withered face grew into the flowing hair and beautiful face of Fairy Truth.

"Rise up, my children," said she. "I must now take you to your palace and give back to the king his father's crown, of which he is now worthy."

She had hardly finished speaking when they found themselves in their palace in the presence of Homo's old teacher, who was glad to give up the crown and to love and serve his former pupil.

The fairy gave back to Homo the ring which he had lost, but he lived so good a life from this time forward that it never again pricked his finger enough to make it bleed.

FAREWELL ADVICE

Farewell, dear child, I have no song to give thee.
No lark could pipe to skies so dull and grey:
But ere we part one lesson I would leave thee,
For every day.

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever.
Do noble things, not dream them all day long:
And so make life, death, and that vast forever,
One grand, sweet song.

Charles Kingsley

THE MILLER OF THE DEE

There dwelt a miller hale and bold
  Beside the river Dee;
He worked and sang from morn to night,
  No lark more blithe than he;
And this the burden of his song
  Forever used to be:
"I envy nobody; no, not I,
  And nobody envies me!"

"Thou'rt wrong, my friend," said old King Hal,
  "As wrong as wrong can be;
For could my heart be light as thine,
  I'd gladly change with thee.
And tell me now, what makes thee sing,
  With voice so loud and free,
While I am sad, though I'm the king,
  Beside the river Dee."

The miller smiled, and doffed his cap.
  "I can earn my bread," quoth he;
"I love my wife, I love my friend,
  I love my children three;
I owe no penny I cannot pay,
  I thank the river Dee
That turns the mill that grinds the corn
  To feed my babes and me."

"Good friend," said Hal, and sighed the while,
  "Farewell! and happy be;
But say no more, if thou'dst be true,
  That no one envies thee.
Thy mealy cap is worth my crown,
  Thy mill my kingdom's fee;
Such men as thou are England's boast,
  O miller of the Dee!"

—*Charles Mackay*

LESSONS FOR LIFE

A good man always helps those who are in need. A brave man is always merciful to those who suffer. A noble man returns good for evil. A happy man loves God and his neighbor.

Wicked people lead their companions into sin and suffering.

Only the good are ever really happy.

Every bad action makes us worse; every good action makes us better.

When we are wicked, those who punish us are our best friends.

Find these truths in the story of The Magic Ring, and in the Miller of the Dee.

What is conscience? How is it like the magic ring?

Why does God sometimes punish us?

What part of Religion, Third Book, does the story of The Magic Ring remind you of?

In what way was Homo like Joseph?

Do riches and power give happiness?

Why was the miller happier than the king?

TO WHOM SHALL WE GIVE THANKS?

A little boy had sought the pump
From whence the sparkling water burst,
And drank with eager joy the draught
That kindly quenched his raging thirst.

Then gracefully he touched his cap,
"I thank you, Mr. Pump," he said,
"For this nice drink you've given me,"
(This little boy had been well-bred).

Then said the Pump: "My little man,
You're welcome to what I have done;
But I am not the one to thank,
I only help the water run."

"Oh, then," the little fellow said,
(Polite he always meant to be)
"Cold Water, please accept my thanks,
You have been very kind to me."

"Ah!" said Cold Water, "don't thank me!
For up the hillside lives a spring
That sends me forth with generous hand
To gladden every living thing."

"I'll thank the spring, then," said the boy,
And gracefully he bowed his head.
"Oh, don't thank me, my little man,"
The spring with silvery accents said.

"Oh! don't thank me, for what am I
Without the dews and summer rain?
Without their aid I ne'er could quench
Your thirst, my little boy, again."

"Oh, well, then," said the little boy,
"I'll gladly thank the rain and dew."
"Pray, don't thank us! Without the sun
We could not fill one cup for you."

"Then, Mr. Sun, ten thousand thanks
For all that you have done for me."
"Stop," said the Sun, with blushing face.
"My little fellow, don't thank me.

"'Twas from the ocean's mighty stores
I drew the draught I gave to thee."
"O ocean, thanks," then said the boy.
It echoed back: "No thanks to me!

"Not unto me, but unto Him
Who formed the depths in which I lie,
Go give thy thanks, my little boy,—
To Him who will thy wants supply."

The boy took off his cap and said,
In tones so gentle and subdued,
"O God, I thank Thee for Thy gift,
Thou art the Giver of all good."

CROSSING THE DESERT—*Frère*

THE CAMEL

Camel, thou art good and mild,
Might'st be guided by a child;
Thou wast made for usefulness,
Man to comfort and to bless:
Thou dost clothe him; thou dost feed;
Thou dost lend to him thy speed;
And through wilds of trackless sand,
In the hot Arabian land,
Where no rock its shadow throws,
Where no cooling water flows,
Where the hot air is not stirred
By the wing of singing bird;
There thou goest, untired and meek,
Day by day, and week by week,
With thy load of precious things—
Silk for merchants, gold for kings,
Pearls of Ormuz, riches rare,
Damascene and Indian ware—
Bale on bale, and heap on heap—
Freighted like a costly ship!
And when week by week is gone,
And the traveler journeys on
Feebly; when his strength is fled,
And his hope and heart seem dead,
Camel, thou dost turn thy eye
On him kindly, soothingly,
As if thou wouldst, cheering, say
"Journey on for this one day—
Do not let they heart despond!
There is water yet beyond!
I can scent it in the air—
Do not let thy heart despair!"
And thou guid'st the traveler there.

—*Mary Howitt*

THE MEETING IN THE DESERT

There is in stillness oft a magic power
To calm the breast when struggling passions lower;
Touch'd by its influence, in the soul arise
Diviner feelings, kindred with the skies.
By this the Arab's kindling thoughts expand,
When circling skies enclose the desert sand;
For this the hermit seeks the thicket grove,
To catch th' inspiring glow of heavenly love.
It is not solely in the freedom given
To purify and fix the heart on heaven;
There is a Spirit singing aye in air,
That lifts us high above all mortal care.

—*Cardinal Newman*

It was a cold, gray morning on the Arabian desert. Up out of a deep ravine swung a Syrian camel. It was milk-white. Its long, slender neck was curved like that of a swan. Its forehead was wide, but its muzzle was so slender that a lady's bracelet might have been slipped over it. Its long, swinging steps were as silent as those of a cat. Its body rocked from side to side. Its forehead was covered with scarlet fringe. A number of bright brass chains hung down on each side of its neck. There was a little silver bell on the end of each chain.

On each side of the camel's hump was strapped

a long, open box. In one of these sat a man whose face was as brown as a coffee berry. There was a green awning over his head. As he rode into the desert the sun was just rising behind him. Before him the level surface was strewn with rocks. Here and there was a tuft of camel grass. There were a few stunted trees.

The camel quickened its steps. Its head pointed straight towards the west. Its wide nostrils drank in the wind. The dead leaves rustled under its feet. Perfume sweetened the air. Swallows flew from the rocks, and white partridges ran whistling and clucking out of the way.

The camel kept on hour after hour. Soon there was not a rock in sight, nor a tree, nor a bird. The whole desert was empty. The sand was driven before the wind like snow and lay piled up in waves: it was covered with a thin crust that rattled under the camel's feet.

The man seemed to be asleep. He neither turned his head nor spoke. Exactly at noon the camel stopped and uttered a peculiar cry. The man seemed to wake up. He drew aside the curtain of

the awning and, after looking at the sun, looked all around him, but there was not a thing in sight in any direction.

Then crossing his hands upon his breast and bowing his head, he prayed silently. His prayer finished, he made a sound way down in his throat. The camel understood and knelt down. The man put his foot on the slender neck of the camel and stepped upon the sand. His limbs were numb from the long ride, so he rubbed his hands and stamped his feet, and walked around the camel, whose eyes were closed as he contentedly chewed his cud.

The man went to the box on the other side of the camel, from which he took a sponge and a leather bottle full of water. He poured some of the water on the sponge and washed the eyes, the face, and the nostrils of his camel. And then he washed his own hands and face.

He took from the box a bundle of rods and a stout cane. He lengthened out the cane until it was much taller than himself and fastened the rods to it and then covered it with a red and white silk cloth, and he had a pretty tent. After this, he went

back to the box and got a carpet for his tent, and some wooden dishes and food for a lunch. But he set three plates instead of one, and then he went to the door of the tent and looked all around him.

In the distance he saw a speck that seemed no bigger than a man's hand. Then he turned to his camel and said: "We are far from home, O racer with the swiftest winds. We are far from home, but God is with us; let us be patient." Taking some beans from a pocket in the saddle, he put them into a bag which he hung under the camel's nose.

II

When he looked up again, the speck on the horizon had grown larger, and in a few minutes it was so near that he could see it was another great white camel, like the first one.

The traveler stood at the door of his tent and watched the camel and its rider draw near. Crossing his arms over his breast, he looked up to heaven and said: "O God, I thank Thee for Thy great mercies."

When the stranger reached the spot where the

camel was kneeling, his camel stopped. The man clasped his hands and bowed his head in prayer for a moment, and then making the sound which caused the camel to kneel down, he stepped upon the sand and walked towards the door of the tent. As he reached it, he said:

"Peace be with thee, O servant of God."

"And with thee, O brother of the true faith," said the man at the door of the tent. "Peace and welcome be to thee." And they embraced and gave each other the kiss of peace.

"Look!" said the first comer. "The third man comes yonder!"

The two men stood in silence and waited until the third great white camel reached the spot and knelt for its rider to descend. After a moment's silent prayer, the stranger stepped upon the sand and, walking to the door of the tent, embraced and gave the kiss of peace to the other two.

The owner of the tent said: "The Spirit brought me here first, and by this I know that I am chosen to be the servant of my brothers. The tent is set and the bread is ready to be broken; let me do my

duty." And taking each of the other men by the hand, he led them within the tent.

When the guests were seated, the host took off their sandals and washed their feet. He poured water on their hands and dried them with napkins. After he had washed his own hands, he said:

"Brothers, let us eat, so that we may be able to do all that God requires of us this day."

Then they joined their hands and bowed their heads and said:

"Bless us, O God, and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive through Thy bounty, and grant that we may always continue to do Thy will."

When the last words were spoken, they raised their eyes and looked at each other in wonder, for each had spoken a language never before heard by the others, and yet each understood perfectly what was said. Their souls were thrilled with divine love, for by this miracle they knew that God was with them.

III

It was in the month of December; the air of the desert was keen and cold, and the long ride had

given the three men good appetites. After they had begun their meal, the host said:

"To a traveler in a strange land, nothing is so sweet as to hear his name on the tongue of a friend. Before us lie many days of companionship. It is time we knew each other. So, if it be agreeable, he who came last shall be the first to speak."

After a moment's pause, the last-comer began: "What I have to tell, my brothers, is so strange that I hardly know where to begin or what to say. I do not understand it myself. I am only sure of one thing, that I am doing God's will, and it is a constant joy to me. For years I had read the Sacred Books of the Hebrews, and I knew from the Prophets that it was time for the Messiah to come and that a star would arise in the heavens to declare His presence. I longed for His coming with all my soul, and I believed that God would take compassion on me and let me see the star.

"I left the city and the noise and quarrels of men and lived alone at the foot of the mountain beside the sea, where I could think about God all the time and pray to Him.

"One night as I sat at the door of my cave, praying to God and trying to know Him, suddenly, on the sea below me, I saw a star begin to burn. Slowly it rose and drew near me and stood over the hill above my door, so that its light shone full upon me. I fell down and slept, and in my dream I heard a voice say:

" 'O Gaspar! thy faith hath conquered! Blessed art thou! With two others, that shall come from a great distance, thou shalt see Him that is promised and shall worship Him. In the morning arise and go to meet them. Keep trust in the Spirit that shall guide thee.'

"And behold, the Spirit has led me here."

Then the second man said: "You may know me, brothers, by the name of Melchior. My story is long and I shall tell it to you as we travel towards Jerusalem to worship the new-born king. All I need say here is that, like our brother Gaspar, I had grown weary of the world with its vanities and quarrels,and sought peace at the top of a high mountain near where the First Parents of men were created. Here there is a beautiful lake from which three rivers flow.

"One night I walked by the shore of the lake and spoke to the listening silence. 'When will God come for His own? Is the Redemption ever to come?' Suddenly a light began to glow out on the water. Soon a star arose and moved towards me, and stood overhead. Its brightness stunned me. While I lay upon the ground, I heard a voice of sweetness say:

" 'Thy love hath conquered. Blessed art thou. The Redemption is at hand. With two others from the ends of the earth thou shalt see the Redeemer and be a witness that He hath come. In the morning arise and go to meet them, and put all thy trust in the Spirit that shall guide thee.'

"I have done so, and here I am."

After a moment's silence, the host said:

"I salute you, my brothers. If you are now pleased to hear me, I will tell you who I am and how I came to be called. Wait for me a moment."

IV

Then he went out and attended to the camels, washing the eyes and faces and nostrils of the two

last-comers and giving them beans to eat. After this he returned and took his seat, saying:

"Your words, brothers, were of the Spirit, and the Spirit gives me to understand them, but of this we shall speak further while on our journey.

"My name is Balthasar. I was born a priest and a prince and had the best education my country afforded, but as I grew up to be a man, I became discontented with the vanities of this world and I could no longer believe in foolish superstitions. I longed for a life, an active, joyous, unending life with God. I prayed to God day by day and gained a strong hope that God would surely grant this life to those who believed in Him, loved Him, and hoped in Him with all their hearts.

"One day I stood up among the scholars and the princes and told them of the new joy that was in my life, and I preached to them of the one true God. Priests and princes and scholars stopped to listen to me. I told them about God, about the soul, about right and wrong, and about the heavenly home that awaited those who lived good lives. My hearers opened their mouths in wonder and then they laughed at me and made fun of me.

"I went away from the dwellings of men to see if I could discover why men would not listen to me, and after a while the truth came to me, and then I dressed in humble garb and went away out from the city among the poorest of the poor. I preached to them exactly as I had preached to the rich and mighty, and they did not laugh. The next evening I preached again, and they believed and rejoiced with me and carried the good news abroad.

"At this meeting a society was formed where all the members gathered together to pray and pledged themselves to serve one true God.

"I returned to the city and sold all my property and went about for some years giving alms to the poor and preaching to all who would listen to me of the one true God. But I found when I returned after long absences that the people had forgotten what I had said, and I knew that all my work was vain, unless God would come Himself to do what no man could do. God must come Himself to redeem the world."

The other two broke in: "Are we not going to find Him? Is the Spirit not going to lead us to His feet?"

"I am just coming to that," said Balthasar. "I retired to the mountain alone to pray that God would show me how to make my work for the people lasting. One night, as I walked in the orchard close by the little lake, I cried out to God: 'The world is dying. When wilt Thou come? Why may I not see the Redemption, O God?' So I prayed. The glassy water was sparkling with stars. One of them seemed to leave its place and rise to the surface, where it became so brilliant that it burned my eyes; then it moved towards me, and stood over my head, so near that I thought I could reach it with my hand. I fell down and covered my face. And a voice as from Heaven said:

" 'Thy hope hath conquered and thy good works. Blessed art thou, O Balthasar. The Redemption for which thou hast prepared so earnestly is at hand. With two others from distant parts of the world thou shalt see the Saviour and adore Him. In the morning arise and go to meet them. And when you three have come to the holy city of Jerusalem, ask the people where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east and have come

to worship Him. Put all thy trust in the Spirit which will guide thee.'

"The Spirit has remained with me to the present."

All three men remained in silence for a few minutes, for their souls were so full of joy that they could not speak. Presently their hands fell apart and they went out of the tent; and as the sun was setting, the three Wise Men mounted their camels and continued their journey to Bethlehem.

LESSONS FOR LIFE

Only those who are properly prepared hear the voice of God when He calls.

The highest wisdom is to seek to know what God wants of us and to obey His call joyously.

Without faith, hope and charity we cannot come to God, or worship Him as He wants to be worshiped.

"Unless the Lord build a house, they labor in vain who build it."

Find these truths in the story of The Meeting in the Desert and in Lead, Kindly Light.

What story in Religion, Second Book, does The Meeting in the Desert call to mind?

What did the Wise Men do when they reached Jerusalem?

What did they do when they found the Infant Jesus?

Can you name any others who were prepared for the coming of Jesus and who recognized Him when they saw Him?

What miracle occurred after the descent of the Holy Ghost that was like the one that took place in the tent in the desert?

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home—
Lead thou me on!
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene—one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
Shouldst lead me on.
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
Lead thou me on!
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will; remember not past years.

So long thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

—*Cardinal Newman*

PART II

COURAGE

He hath shewed might in his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble.

Luke I, 51-52

So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in Heaven.

Matt., V, 16

When'er across this sinful flesh of mine
I draw the holy sign,
All good thoughts stir within me, and renew
Their slumbering strength divine;
Till there springs up a courage high and true
To suffer and to do.

—*Cardinal Newman*

Virtue is its own reward, and brings with it the truest and highest pleasures: but they who cultivate it for the pleasure-sake are selfish, not religious, and will never gain the pleasure, because they never can have the virtue.

—*Cardinal Newman*

St. Michael the Archangel—*Guido Reni*

THE OWL AND THE PUSSY-CAT

The Owl and the Pussy-Cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea-green boat:
They took some honey and plenty of money
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.

The Owl looked up to the stars above
And sang to his small guitar,
"O lovely Pussy, O Pussy, my love,
What a beautiful Pussy you are,
You are,
You are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!"

Pussy said to the Owl, "You elegant fowl,
How charmingly sweet you sing!
Oh, let us be married; too long we have tarried;
But what shall we do for a ring?"

They sailed away, for a year and a day,
To the land where the bong-tree grows;
And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood,
With a ring at the end of his nose,
His nose,
His nose,
With a ring at the end of his nose.

"Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for a shilling
Your ring?" Said the Piggy, "I will."
So they took it away, and were married next day
By the Turkey who lives on the hill.

They dined on mince and slices of quince,
Which they ate with a runcible spoon;
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
They danced by the light of the moon,
The moon,
The moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.

—*Edward Lear*

From the back window down to the water's edge the yard was filled with great burdocks which grew so high that under the tallest of them a little child might hide. The spot was as wild as if it had been in the very center of a thick wood, instead of being the back yard.

In the center of the burdock patch sat a duck upon her nest waiting for her eggs to hatch. This was pleasant work at first, but in time it grew very tiresome, for the little ones were so long in coming out of their shells and the poor duck seldom had any visitors. The other ducks liked much better to swim about in the pond than to climb up the banks and sit under the burdocks to gossip with her. The poor duck was lonely.

After a while one shell cracked, and then another, and from each one came a fluffy little yellow ball that lifted its head and cried, "Peep, peep!" "Quack! quack!" said the mother, and then the little ones all tried to say *quack*, too.

They looked about them on every side at the tall weeds and the green grass. "What a great world it is, to be sure," said the little ones when they found how much more room they had than when they were in the egg-shell. "Do you think this is all the world?" said their mother. "Wait till you have seen the garden. And the world goes far beyond that down to the field, but I have never been so far from home."

"Are you all out?" she asked, as she rose up to look at the eggs. "No, not all; the biggest egg is here yet, I declare. I wonder how long this is going to last? I am beginning to be tired of it." But for all that she sat down again.

"Well, how are you to-day?" quacked an old duck who came up to pay her a visit.

"Very well, I thank you. All the little ones are out but one. The shell of one is hard and it will not break," said the mother, who still remained on her nest. "But just look what a pretty family I have. Are they not the prettiest little ducklings you ever saw? They are just the image of their father."

"Let me see the egg that will not break," said the old duck. "It's a turkey's egg, I am sure. I made a mistake like that once, and when the little ones came out they were afraid of the water. I quacked and quacked, but they would not obey me. Let me see the egg. Yes, I am sure it's a turkey's egg. Take my advice and leave it where it is. Come down to the pond and teach the other children how to swim."

"I have sat on it so long that I think I will sit a little longer," said the mother. "A day or two more won't matter."

"Very well; do as you please," said the visitor, and she waddled off in a pout.

At last the big egg broke, and the young bird cried, "Peep, peep," as he crept out of the shell. His mother stared at him and did not know what to think. "Really," she said, "this is a very big duckling, and he is not a bit like his brothers and sisters. I wonder if he will grow up to be a turkey? Well, we shall see when we get to the water, for he will go into the water if I have to push him in myself."

THE PETS—*Beyschlag*

II

The next day the mother duck took her whole family down to the pond. She jumped into the water with a splash, saying, "Quack, quack!" One after another the little ducklings jumped in, too. The water closed over their heads, but they came up again in an instant and swam about quite prettily, with their legs paddling under them. The big, ugly, grey-coated duckling jumped in with the rest, and he could swim with the best of them.

"Oh!" said the mother, "he's not a turkey. See how well he uses his legs and how nicely he holds himself. He is my own child. And, after all, he's not so very ugly.

"Quack, quack, come with me now and I will take you into society, but you must keep close to me, or you may be stepped on. Above all, look out for the cat."

When they all reached the barn-yard, two families were fighting for an eel's head. While they quarreled, the cat ran away with it.

"See, children, it's the way of the world," said the mother duck; "while they quarrel among them-

selves, the enemy runs off with the prize." She would have liked the eel for herself. "Come, now, walk prettily; let me see how well you can behave. You must bow your heads nicely to the old duck yonder. She has Spanish blood in her and is the leader. Don't you see she has a red rag tied to her leg, which is a great honor for a duck. It shows that people are very anxious not to lose her. And she is noticed by everybody that comes to the barnyard.

"Come, now, don't turn in your toes. A well-bred duckling spreads his feet wide apart, just like his father and mother. This is the way, see! Now bend your necks and say *quack*."

The ducklings did as they were told, but the other ducks stared and said: "Look! here comes another brood, as if there were not enough of us already! Bless me! what a queer looking object that fellow is. We don't want him here, anyway." Then they flew at him and bit him in the neck.

"Let him alone," said the mother; "he is doing you no harm."

"Yes, but he is so big and ugly. He is a perfect

fright," said a spiteful duck. "A little biting will do him good."

"Your other children are very pretty," said the old duck with the rag on her leg; "but that one is really very ugly. I wish you could smooth him up a bit."

"That's not possible, your grace," replied the mother. "He is not pretty, but he has a very good disposition and he swims every bit as well as the others. I think he will grow up pretty, and perhaps he will be smaller after a while. He remained too long in the egg; the shell was so hard he couldn't come out; that is all that's the matter with him. Anyhow, he is a drake, and I think he will be able to take care of himself."

"Well, make yourselves at home," said the old duck, "and if you find an eel's head, you may bring it to me."

They were all comfortable except the poor unhappy duckling. He was bitten and pushed and made fun of not only by the ducks, but by all the other fowls.

"He's too big," said the gobbler, as he spread out

THE FARMER'S DAUGHTER—*Gardner*

his tail and gobbled at him; and he became so angry that his head was as red as the piece of flannel around the old duck's leg. The poor duckling didn't know where to go or what to do.

Matters grew worse from day to day. The poor duckling was knocked about by every one. Even his brothers and sisters were unkind to him. Once he heard his oldest sister say: "Ah, you ugly creature, I wish the cat would get you." And once his mother said she wished he had never been hatched. The ducks pecked him, the chickens beat him, and the girl who fed them kicked him.

III

At last the poor duckling could stand the unkindness of all around him no longer. He made up his mind to run away from home. As he flew over the hedge he frightened the little birds. "They are afraid of me because I am so ugly," thought the duckling; so he shut his eyes and flew on and on. When he looked around he found himself in the middle of a big swamp that was full of wild ducks. Here he remained all night, for he was very tired and very sad.

In the morning when the wild ducks woke up, they stared at their new companion. "What sort of a duck are you?" they all cried as they gathered around him. He bowed to them as politely as he could, but said nothing. "You're very ugly," said the leader of the wild ducks; "but that will not matter if you do not want to marry one of our family."

The poor duckling had no thought of marrying anybody. All he wanted was to be let alone. After he had been in the swamp a few days, there came two wild geese. You might have called them goslings, they were so young. Perhaps that's the reason they were so impolite.

"Listen, friend," said one of them; "you are so ugly that we like you very well. Come with us. There is another swamp not far from here in which there are a number of pretty wild geese, and they are all unmarried. It's a fine chance for you to get a wife and a fortune, ugly as you are."

Bang, bang, sounded in the air, and the two impudent wild geese fell dead among the rushes. Bang, bang, was echoed on every side, and whole flocks of wild geese rose up from the swamp.

As the smoke rolled away, the dogs ran in among the rushes to gather up the dead geese. How frightened the poor duckling was. He hid his head under his wing, for just at that moment a terrible dog came near him. His jaws were open and his tongue hung out and his eyes glared fearfully. He stuck his nose close to the duckling and showed his sharp teeth, but the next minute he jumped into the water without touching him.

"Oh!" said the duckling, "how glad I am that I'm so ugly! Even the dog wouldn't bite me." He lay quite still, so that no one would find him. The guns banged away all day long.

After the huntsmen were gone, he ran over the fields and meadows as fast as he could. In the evening a storm arose. The duckling found a poor tumble-down hut and crept close to it for shelter. After a while he noticed that there was a hole in the bottom of the door. He crept through it very quietly and found shelter for the night.

In this hut there lived an old woman, a cat and a hen. The cat was a great pet. He could raise his back and purr. He could even throw out sparks

from his fur if it were stroked the wrong way. The hen had very short legs, but she laid good eggs, and her mistress loved her.

In the morning the stranger was discovered. The cat began to purr and the hen to cluck.

"What's all the noise about?" asked the old woman. Her sight was poor, and when she saw the duckling she thought it must be a fat duck that had strayed from home. "I hope it will lay some eggs," said she.

So the duckling was allowed to remain on trial for three weeks, but it did not lay any eggs. Now, the cat was master of the house and the hen was mistress. They had a very poor opinion of the rest of the world.

"Can you lay eggs?" asked the hen. "Then please stop talking."

"Can you raise your back, or purr, or throw out sparks?" asked the cat. "Then you should be seen and not heard."

So the poor duckling sat in a corner feeling very downhearted. When the sunshine and the fresh air came into the room through the open door, he so

wanted to swim on the water that he couldn't help talking about it.

"How absurd!" said the hen. "You have nothing else to do; that's why you have these foolish fancies. If you could only purr or lay eggs you might get sense."

"But it's so delightful to swim about on the water," said the duckling. "It's so pleasant to feel it close over your head while you dive down to the bottom."

"Delightful, indeed! It must be a queer sort of pleasure," said the hen. "Why, you must be crazy! Ask the cat; he is the cleverest animal I know. Ask him how he would like to swim about on the water or to dive under it. I'll say nothing about my own opinion. Ask our mistress, the old woman. How do you think she would like to swim and have the water close over her head?"

"You don't understand me," said the duckling.

"We don't understand you! Who can understand you? Do you think you know more than the cat and the old woman, to say nothing of myself! You ought to be thankful that you are where you

can learn something. But your company is not very agreeable. Believe me, I am speaking for your good. If I tell you unpleasant truths, that's only a proof of my friendship. I advise you to lay eggs and to learn to purr as quickly as possible."

"I believe I must go out into the world again," said the poor duckling.

"The sooner the better," said the hen.

IV

All the leaves had fallen from the trees. The cold winds were whistling through the bare branches. The poor duckling was out in the world again alone. One evening, just at sunset, a flock of beautiful birds came out of the rushes. The duckling had never seen birds like them before. They were swans. They curved their graceful necks,and their soft feathers were as white as snow.

The swans uttered a strange cry as they spread their wings and flew away to the warm southland. The ugly duckling watched them, and he felt a strange feeling. He whirled round and round in the water, stretched out his neck towards the birds,

and a strange cry came out of his throat that frightened him. He thought he had never seen such beautiful birds. He did not know their names nor where they were going, but he wished to be with them.

The winter grew colder and colder. The duckling was obliged to swim about in the water to keep it from freezing around him; every night the space in which he swam became smaller and smaller. At length it froze so hard that the ice in the water cracked as he moved. At last he was frozen fast in the ice.

Early in the morning, a farmer who was passing by broke the ice around the duckling with his wooden shoe and carried him home to his wife. It felt good to be near the fire. When he was warmed the children wanted to play with him, but the duckling was frightened, and in trying to get away from them, he fell into the milk pan and splashed the milk all over the room. Then the woman clapped her hands, and this frightened him more than ever. He flew into the butter cask and then into the meal tub. What a condition he was in! The woman screamed and struck at him with the broom. The

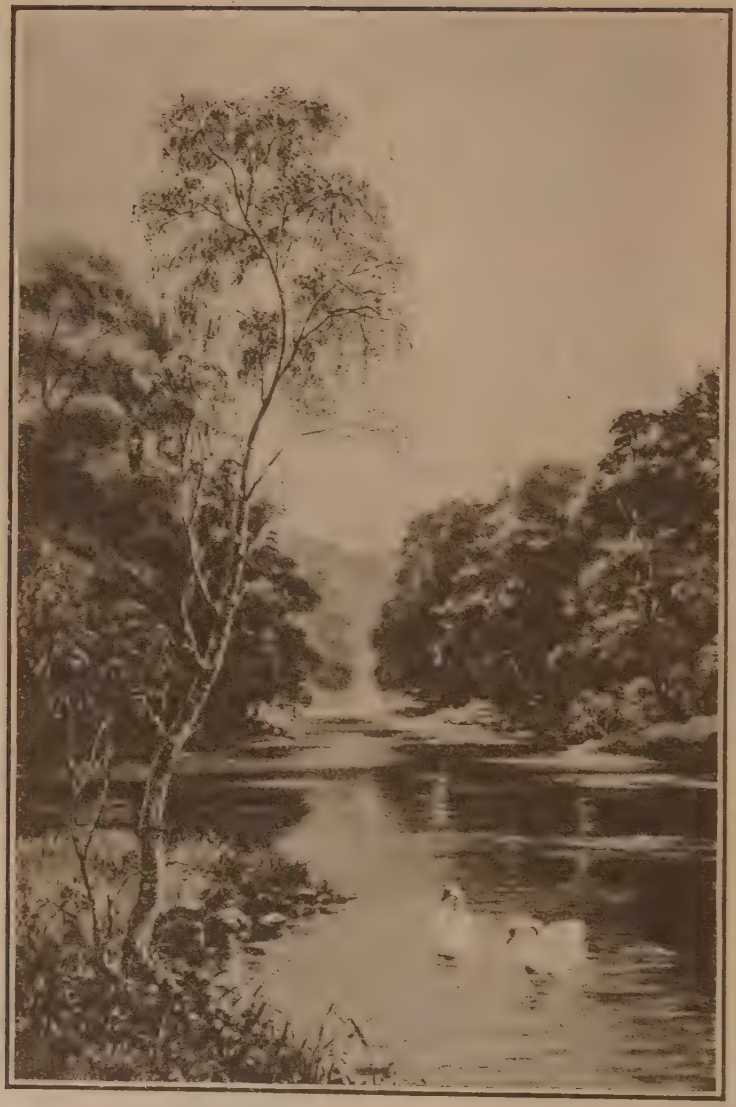
children screamed with laughter and fell over each other in their efforts to catch him, but the duckling got away through the open door.

The duckling afterwards never knew how he got through that winter. How glad he was when the warm rains came and when he heard the robins sing and knew that spring had come.

The duckling felt that his wings had grown strong as he flapped them against his sides and rose high into the air. All at once he found himself in a large garden without knowing how he got there. The apple trees were covered with blossoms. The willows were dipping their branches in the stream which flowed by the foot of the garden. Everything was beautiful.

Out from the rushes came two beautiful white swans, rustling their feathers and swimming lightly over the smooth water. The duckling remembered the beautiful birds he had seen in the autumn.

"I will go to these beautiful birds," he said, "even if they kill me because I am so ugly. It will be better to be killed by them than to be pecked by the ducks, beaten by the hens and pushed about by the girl who feeds the chickens."



Then he flew to the water and swam out to the beautiful swans. The moment they saw the stranger they went to meet him with outstretched wings.

"Kill me," said the poor creature, and he bent his head down to the water and waited for death. But what do you think he saw in the clear water? He was no longer an ugly grey bird that was unpleasant to look at, but a beautiful swan.

To be born in a duck's nest under the burdocks doesn't matter to a bird, if he is hatched from a swan's egg. Our friend felt glad that he had suffered sorrow and trouble, because he would enjoy the pleasure that now came to him all the more. And then, too, he had learned how to be kind to birds that others looked down on.

The swans swam around the newcomer and stroked his neck with their beaks to let him know how welcome he was. A few minutes afterwards the children came down to the pond and threw bread and cake into the water.

"See," cried the youngest child; "there is a new one." The rest of the children ran to their father and mother dancing and clapping their hands and

shouting joyously: "There is another swan! A new one has come." Then they threw more bread and cake into the water and said: "The new one is the most beautiful of all." And the old swans bowed their heads before him. Then he felt bashful and hid his head under his wing. He did not know what to do, he was so happy.

TO MY GUARDIAN ANGEL

Watch over me while I'm asleep,
And, as God bids you, vigil keep;
And every night above my head
Bend down, dear Angel, o'er the bed.
Have pity on my feebleness,
Walk by my side to guard and bless;
Talk to me all along the way,
And, while I hearken what you say,
Lest I should fall, help me to stand;
I pray you, Angel, hold my hand!

—*Selected*

LESSONS FOR LIFE

It is always uncomfortable to be where we are not wanted.

Most people judge us by their own standards.

Suffering always precedes real happiness.

Rest is pleasant after labor.

Dull children who always try to do what is right often become the brightest and the best men and women.

Ugly children, if their hearts are pure, often grow up to be beautiful men and women.

Find these truths in the story of The Ugly Duckling.

What good did all his suffering do the ugly duckling?

Did his experience make him kind to other birds all the rest of his life?

Does suffering make us sympathize with others?

Does suffering make us better?

Can you find any truths that are in both this lesson and in the story of The Magic Ring?

Are the same truths in the story of Joseph?

THE BABY

Where did you come from, baby dear?
Out of the everywhere into the here.

Where did you get your eyes so blue?
Out of the sky as I came through.

What makes the light in them sparkle and spin?
Some of the starry spikes left in.

Where did you get that little tear?
I found it waiting when I got here.

What makes your forehead so smooth and high?
A soft hand stroked it as I went by.

What makes your cheek like a warm, white rose?
Something better than anyone knows.

Whence that three-cornered smile of bliss?
Three angels gave me at once a kiss.

Where did you get that pearly ear?
God spoke, and it came out to hear.

Where did you get those arms and hands?
Love made itself into hooks and bands.

Feet, whence did you come, you darling things?
From the same box as the cherub's wings.

How did they all just come to be you?
God thought about me, and so I grew.

But how did you come to us, you dear?
God thought about *you*, and so I am here.

—*George Macdonald.*

CRADLE HYMN

Hush, my dear, lie still and slumber;
Holy angels guard thy bed;
Heavenly blessings without number
Gently falling on thy head.

Sleep, my babe, thy food and raiment,
House and home, thy friends provide;
All without thy care, or payment,
All thy wants are well supplied.

Soft and easy is thy cradle;
Coarse and hard thy Saviour lay,
When his birthplace was a stable,
And his softest bed was hay.

May'st thou live to know and fear him,
Trust and love him all thy days;
Then go dwell forever near him,
See his face and sing his praise.

—*Isaac Watts*

THE RAINBOW

Boats sail on the rivers,
  And ships sail on the seas;
But clouds that sail across the sky
  Are prettier far than these.

There are bridges on the rivers,
  As pretty as you please;
But the bow that bridges heaven,
  And overtops the trees,
And builds a road from earth to sky,
  Is prettier far than these.

—*Christina Rossetti*

THE LITTLE HERO OF HAARLEM

Holland is a little country far across the sea. It is a land of beautiful flowers, where you may see whole fields of lilies and roses, of carnations and tulips. Every week boatloads of flowers are sent to England and to the United States.

The ground in Holland is very rich, but it is below the level of the sea, and the water would roll in over it if something were not done to prevent it. But something has been done. A long time ago great banks of earth, called dikes, were built along the shore to keep out the sea.

This was all very well as far as the sea was concerned, but the great rivers that flow down from the Alps would have spread over the whole land and drowned all the people if something had not been done to prevent them. But something had been done. The people built great canals to conduct the water from the mountains to the sea.

This was all very well as far as the rivers were concerned, but the water that comes down from the clouds when it rains—and it rains very often in Holland—would have flooded the whole country and drowned all the people if something had not been done to prevent it. But something had been done. The people built great windmills which pump the rain-water up into the canals.

Men are appointed to watch over the dikes, the canals and the windmills and to keep them mended. These men, who are called sluicers, also open and shut the great sluice-gates which control the flow of water in the canals.

A long time ago there lived near the city of Haarlem a sluicer whose little son is the hero of this story. As Hans went with his father, day after

WINDMILL—*Ruysdael.*

day, to watch him open and shut the sluice-gates, he learned that the lives of all the people depended on the sluicers and their watchful care of the dikes. His father often told him that if the sea succeeded in finding ever so little a hole in a dike, it would quickly tear down the whole bank and drown all the people.

The father and son often stopped in to see a poor old blind man who lived a long way from their home. Hans grew very fond of the old man, who loved to tell him stories of the wars and of heroes who had lived in the olden time.

II

One day when Hans was eight years old, his father gave him permission to go alone to see his old blind friend and to take him a basket of fruit and cake. He told him to hurry back lest the night should overtake him.

Hans was an obedient boy. It made him very happy to see how his friend enjoyed his present, but he did not remain to listen to the old man's stories. He remembered what his father had said.

and hurried off home, with the old man's blessing upon him.

Hans was about half way home when the sun set. He was growing tired, for the way was long; but as he looked down the bank he saw some beautiful flowers, and ran down to gather them for his mother. As he stooped to pluck them, he saw a few drops of water trickling through the bank. At once he thought of what his father had so often told him about the danger of a little hole in the dike, and how if the sea ever came through it would quickly tear a great gap in the wall and flood all the land.

Even while he looked at it the little hole seemed to be growing larger. In another minute the water was spurting up in a tiny fountain. Hans looked around, but could see nothing with which to stop the hole. He stuck his chubby finger in it and was delighted to find that it was a tight fit and stopped the water.

But what was he to do now? He called as loud as he could, but it was a lonely spot and no one heard him. It grew darker and darker. Hans determined to stay at his post all night, and he asked

God to help him save his country. He knew that if he left the hole open he could not get help in time, and no one would be likely to pass that way before morning.

Hans lay down on the ground and kept his finger in the hole. He could hear the waves of the sea, slap, slap, slap, on the other side of the dike, and down under the slapping was a gurgling, rumbling sound that seemed very near. By-and-by his finger grew numb and his arm began to pain, but Hans shut his teeth and determined to stay at his post.

The night wind grew chilly and it moaned like some one in pain. The hours seemed very long. The night was as dark as pitch and Hans was afraid, for he had never before been away from home at night, but he remembered his angel guardian and took new courage. The pain in his arm grew worse every minute. As he listened to the murmur of the sea it seemed to say: "I am the great sea. No one can stand against me. Who are you, little boy, to stand in my way? Beware, beware."

Hans could hear his heart beating. He wondered if morning would ever come. As the night wore

on he became more and more frightened. The water went on beating against the wall, murmuring, "I will come through; I will come through. I'll get you; I'll get you! Run, run, before I come!"

At one time the voice of the sea seemed so clear that Hans jumped up. He had almost pulled his finger out of the hole, when he remembered how the sea would rush in and drown all the people while they slept. Hans prayed for strength, set his teeth again, and cried out in a defiant voice: "You *shall not* come through! God will not let you! I *will not* run!"

It seemed to be the darkness that shouted back: "Hello, who's there?" Hans was startled. He thought it was a ghost. His hair stood up on end, but he answered bravely: "It is Hans, the sluice-keeper's son."

A man ran down the bank crying: "My child, what are you doing here at this hour of the night?" It was Father Van Walleghem, returning from a sick call. "I am keeping back the sea," said Hans. "It has made a hole through the dike."

It did not take the good priest long to plug up the hole. The little hero who had defied the sea all night long and saved the people from the flood, was so weak that he could scarcely stand up. Father Van Walleghem carried him home. His parents were surprised, for they thought the old man had kept Hans over night. When the priest told them what the boy had done they were proud and happy, indeed. And to this day the people of Holland love to tell of the noble courage shown by the little hero of Haarlem.

EXCELSIOR

The shades of night were falling fast,
As through an Alpine village passed
A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice,
A banner with the strange device,
Excelsior!

His brow was sad; his eye beneath
Flashed like a falchion from its sheath,
And like a silver clarion rung
The accents of that unknown tongue,
Excelsior!

In happy homes he saw the light
Of household fires gleam warm and bright;
Above, the spectral glaciers shone,
And from his lips escaped a groan.
Excelsior!

"Try not the pass!" the old man said,
"Dark lowers the tempest overhead,
The roaring torrent is deep and wide!"
And loud that clarion voice replied,
Excelsior!

"O stay!" the maiden said, "and rest
Thy weary head upon this breast!"
A tear stood in his bright blue eye,
But still he answered, with a sigh,
Excelsior!

"Beware the pine-tree's withered branch!
Beware the awful avalanche!"
This was the peasant's last good-night!
A voice replied, far up the height,
Excelsior!

At break of day, as heavenward
The pious monks of St. Bernard
Uttered the oft-repeated prayer,
A voice cried through the startled air,
Excelsior!

A traveler, by the faithful hound,
Half-buried in the snow, was found,
Still grasping in his hand of ice,
That banner, with the strange device,
Excelsior!

There, in the twilight cold and grey,
Lifeless, but beautiful, he lay,
And from the sky, serene and far,
A voice fell, like a falling star,
Excelsior!

—*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

LESSONS FOR LIFE

Those who are thoughtful of others and who perform daily deeds of kindness, become heroes when the need arises.

A noble man does not count his suffering as anything in comparison with the general good.

Those who are faithful in little things will be given great things to do in God's own good time.

Find these truths in the story of The Little Hero of Haarlem.

Which of these truths is illustrated in the story of Litttle Fir?

Which of them is to be found in Rock Ledge Light?

Which of these truths is illustrated in the life of Our Lord and His Blessed Mother?

MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES

After Jacob died, his twelve sons continued to live in Egypt. God blessed all their labors. He gave them abundant crops; He multiplied their sheep and cattle; but the greatest blessing He gave them was many children. He had promised Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the sands on the seashore, or as the stars in the heavens, and He was fulfilling his promise.

For a time Pharao was very good to the children of Israel, for he remembered how much he owed to Joseph for having saved the country from famine. But when Pharao died and another Pharao took his place, the Children of Israel were not in such high favor.

Little by little Pharao and all the Egyptians forgot what they owed to the Children of Israel. They became envious of their growing wealth and feared their increasing numbers. They were afraid that in time this strange people would make war on them and conquer them and take their country from them.

Pharao ordered that the Hebrews be compelled to make bricks and build great cities with high walls around them. He thought that by making the people work hard they would grow discouraged. But in this he was very much mistaken, for the harder they worked the stronger they grew, and the more God blessed them and the more abundantly He multiplied their children.

Pharao ordered the task-masters to increase the labor of the Hebrews and to treat them cruelly and beat them with lashes. He hoped in this way to break their spirit and make cowards of them.

But God still continued to bless them and to multiply their children until their number had grown to be exceedingly great. And fear laid hold of Pharao lest the Hebrews should rise up and slay all the Egyptians, so he gave orders to his soldiers to kill all the baby boys that should be born among the Hebrews.

God listened to the cries of the little ones, and in His mercy determined to put an end to the cruel sufferings of His Chosen People. God did not need an army to conquer Pharao, and to punish him for

his wickedness. He usually takes the weak things of earth with which to do great things, so every one may know that it is His power, and not the power of man, that punishes evil and rewards goodness. In the present instance, God chose a little babe as the means through which to punish the Egyptians for their cruelty and to free His Chosen People from slavery.

II

The descendants of each of the twelve sons of Israel had grown so numerous that they were called a tribe, so that there were at this time twelve tribes of Israel.

Now, there lived in Gessen a man of the tribe of Levi named Amram. Amram and his wife Jochabed were not remarkable people, and we would probably never have heard of them if it had not been for their three wonderful children. The oldest child was a daughter named Miriam. She had a little brother named Aaron, who was three years old at the time Pharao gave orders for all the little baby boys that should be born thereafter among the Hebrews to be killed.

Little Aaron was safe, but a short time afterwards God sent him and Miriam a baby brother. Their mother loved the dear little baby, and hid him for three months. After this she became afraid that Pharao's soldiers would find him and kill him, and she did a very clever thing to save the baby's life.

She made a basket of bulrushes big enough to hold the baby, and covered it on the outside with pitch, so that it would float and keep out the water. When it was finished it looked like a little Noe's ark. Jochabed then placed the baby in the little ark, and carrying it down to the river, set it on the water, and pushed it out from the shore.

Miriam watched the little ark as it floated down the river. When it went around the bend, she followed it, running along the bank, until she saw it drift in among the bulrushes just where Pharao's daughter came down to bathe every day. She hid among the willows and waited to see what would happen.

When the princess, accompanied by her maids, came down to the river that afternoon to bathe, she

MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES—*Delaroche*

saw the little ark floating on the water among the bulrushes, and ordered one of her maids to bring it to her. They opened the basket, and Pharao's daughter was delighted with the beautiful little baby-boy. She said: "This must be one of the little Hebrew babies," and called it Moses, which, in the Egyptian language, means saved from the water.

Miriam saw the princess take the baby in her arms and caress it, and coming out of her hiding place, she ran up to her and asked if she should go and get a Hebrew woman to nurse it. The princess thanked the little girl and told her to run off as fast as she could and find a nurse.

You may be sure it did not take Miriam long to run home and tell her mother the good news. The princess did not know that Jochabed was the mother of the baby, but she gladly hired her to take care of it. She adopted the child as her own son, and when Moses was old enough she took him to the palace and brought him up as a prince.

Moses studied with Pharao's children and learned a great many things that were useful to him. All

this helped him to do the great work which God gave him to do when he grew to be a man.

But to do God's work, Moses had many things to learn which earthly kings could not teach him. When he had learned all that he could at the palace, God called him out of Egypt, and led him to Mount Horeb, where Moses dwelt for forty years. During all this time he prayed to God and learned His ways. When the right time came, God spoke to him out of a burning bush and told him all that he had to do to deliver his people from the hands of the cruel tyrants in Egypt.

The Master needeth not
Our tiny service; yet His heart benign
Enlists our feebleness, and bids us share
His work divine.

He marks not small and great,
But all He counts with tenderness untold;
For smallest ministries are great if touched
With love's pure gold.

Good Master! by Thy side,
May we, Thy children, for Thy Heart divine
Toil on with love and zeal, and may our lives
Be wholly Thine.

Sr. Genevieve Todd

LESSONS FOR LIFE

Whoever opposes God's will is sure to be defeated.

God is never in a hurry, but He always punishes cruelty and sin.

God always hears the cry of the oppressed and comes to their aid in the hour of need.

Find these truths in the story of Moses.

Why did Pharao order all the baby boys of the Hebrews to be killed?

Why did Herod order all the baby boys in Bethlehem to be killed.

Why does God use the weak things of this earth to accomplish great things?

Tell all you know about the way God used Moses to punish the Egyptians for their cruelty.

THE ARROW AND THE SONG

I shot an arrow into the air;
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air;
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak,
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

—*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

WILLIAM TELL

Switzerland is a little country in the center of Europe. It is filled with high mountains. Many of the Alpine peaks are covered with snow even in midsummer. Great masses of ice, called glaciers, move slowly down from the Alps into the valleys and feed the rivers. There are many beautiful, clear lakes up among the mountains. In the rich and beautiful valleys, sheltered by the mountains, there dwelt for hundreds of years a free people.

GOATS ON THE MOUNTAIN—*Auguste Bonheur*

A long time ago there lived in Switzerland a hero whose name was William Tell. He was a huntsman who lived far up on the mountainside. Simple food and life in the open air made him strong and healthy. His foot was as sure as that of the mountain-deer which he hunted. He never slipped as he leaped from rock to rock.

In those days there were no guns. Gunpowder had not yet been invented. Tell used a cross-bow, and his eye was so true that he seldom missed his

mark. He was said to be the best shot in the world, and easily got plenty of game for his family. He was as happy as the day was long, and we would probably never have heard of him had his country remained in peace.

But the Austrians cast envious eyes on the beautiful forests of Switzerland, and sent a great army into the land, who conquered the people and robbed them of their possessions. A man by the name of Gessler was appointed governor over the conquered people. He was a cruel tyrant who constantly insulted the people and tried to break their spirit.

One day he placed his cap on the top of a pole in the marketplace of the little town of Altdorf, and gave orders that every one who passed by should uncover his head and salute the cap on the pole. This made the people so angry that they kept away from the marketplace.

William Tell, who was up at his mountain home, had not heard of the order, and when he came to town with his little son to visit his father, he passed through the marketplace. As he passed by the pole a soldier cried:

"Halt! Do you not see Gessler's cap on the top of the pole?"

Tell answered: "Yes, I see a cap; but what of it?"

"Gessler has given orders," replied the soldier, "that every one who passes shall uncover his head and salute the cap."

"That I shall never do," replied Tell. "I shall never bow to Gessler's hat, nor to the hat of any other tyrant."

At this moment Gessler himself rode into the square, accompanied by several soldiers. He heard the angry words and asked what the trouble was all about. When the soldier told him what Tell had said, his face flushed with anger, but he was glad to have this opportunity of punishing Tell, of whom he had often heard.

He ordered that Tell should be handcuffed and thrown into prison. He wanted to get time to think of some excuse for putting him to death.

As Tell was led away by the soldiers, Gessler saw the little boy. He asked who he was, and when he learned that he was Tell's son, he ordered him

to take off his hat and salute the cap on the pole. The boy refused. He was determined to follow his father's example, and as a consequence he was sent off to prison with him.

II

After the father and son had lain in prison during long, weary months, Gessler sent for Tell, and said to him:

"I hear that you can shoot with a bow and arrow better than any other man in Switzerland."

To this Tell answered: "If I had my bow in my hand this minute, I would show you how well I can shoot."

"That is just what I want you to do," said Gessler, "and that is what you shall do. To-morrow your son shall stand at one side of the square with an apple on his head, and you shall stand at the other side and shoot the apple with an arrow."

"That I shall not do," replied Tell; "for I might miss the apple and kill my boy."

"If you will not do it," replied Gessler, "my men shall shoot your boy before your eyes."

Tell begged Gessler to give him any other test of marksmanship that might please him, but not to endanger the life of his son.

But Gessler, who was delighted to find that he had the power to torture Tell, said:

"You shall shoot the apple from Walter's head to-morrow, and if you miss it, both you and your son shall die."

"And what if I do hit the apple?" asked Tell.

"Then both of you shall go free," replied Gessler, as he ordered Tell to be taken back to prison.

The next day the brave little boy stood up on one side of the square with an apple on his head. He offered up a silent prayer to Our Lord for courage, and then said:

"I am not afraid, father; I know you will hit the apple."

Tell, with his bow and arrow, stood on the other side of the square.

"It is a long way to shoot," said he, "and the sun shines in my eyes."

"Be silent," roared Gessler, "and do as you are commanded."

Tell lifted his bow and drew back the arrow. He was the only man in all Switzerland who could have bent that bow.

"This arrow is crooked," said he to the guard, as he slipped it under his belt and drew another from the quiver. He placed the second arrow on the bow and, with a prayer to God to guide it in its flight, he shot it with unerring aim and turned away his face. He was afraid that he might have killed his son.

A great shout rose up from all the people, and in a moment he felt a little arm around his neck and in his ear rang the joyous voice of his son.

"Father, I am safe! See, the arrow went straight through the center of the apple!"

That was why the men had shouted. Even Gessler's soldiers were glad that William Tell had been able to save his life and that of his little son by his splendid shot.

Gessler was angrier than ever. He was cheated out of his revenge. He had been sure that neither Tell nor any one else could hit the apple at that long distance. He put spurs to his horse and rode up to

where Tell stood with his hand on his son's head. He wanted to find some excuse to break his promise and send Tell back to prison. But when he looked around at the faces of his soldiers, he was afraid to give the wicked command, and so he said to Tell:

"You may go free now, but let me never see your face again, or you shall suffer for it."

As Tell turned to leave the square, Gessler saw the arrow in his belt, and called after him:

"Halt, sir! What were you going to do with that arrow in your belt?"

"I was going to shoot you with it, tyrant, if I had harmed my boy."

At this Gessler took courage and ordered his soldiers to seize Tell and his son and drag them off to prison.

God sometimes allows wicked people to fill up the measure of their sins before he punishes them, and He often allows the just to suffer for a time, so that they may give proof of their courage and virtue, but in the end He always rewards them.

Now, the soldiers, in taking Tell back to prison,

had to cross the lake in a little boat. When they were out in the middle of the lake a great storm arose, which nearly drowned them. The wind drove the boat onto a rocky shore, where Tell and his son escaped and fled to their home in the mountains.

Soon all the brave men in Switzerland gathered around Tell. With his little band of loyal followers, William Tell killed the cruel Gessler and drove the enemies out of their country, and Switzerland was once more a free land.

In the Square where the tyrant, Gessler, placed his hat on a pole for the people to salute, there is now a beautiful statue of William Tell, who, by his courage, freed his people.

HOW SLEEP THE BRAVE

How sleep the brave who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest!
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallowed mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There Honor comes, a pilgrim grey,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And Freedom shall awhile repair
To dwell a weeping hermit there.

—*William Collins*

LESSONS FOR LIFE

God always defends those who put their trust in Him.

Cruelty and injustice always return in the end upon the head of the tyrant.

It is better to die in a just cause than to do wicked things through fear of evil men.

Find these truths in the story of William Tell.

Which of these truths do you find in the story of the Seven Black Imps?

Which of them is illustrated in the story of The Coward and his Wife?

Which of them is to be found in the stories of The Little Hero of Haarlem and of Rock Ledge Light?

Which of these truths is illustrated in the story of Joseph?

OVER AND OVER AGAIN

Over and over again,
No matter which way I turn,
I always find in the book of life
Some lesson I have to learn.

I must take my turn at the mill,
I must grind out the golden grain,
I must work at my task with a resolute will,
Over and over again.

We cannot measure the need
Of even the tiniest flower,
Nor check the flow of the golden sands
That run through a single hour;

But the morning dews must fall,
And the sun and the summer rain
Must do their part, and perform it all
Over and over again.

Over and over again,
The brook through the meadow flows,
And over and over again
The ponderous mill-wheel goes.

Once doing will not suffice,
Though doing be not in vain;
And a blessing failing us once or twice,
May come if we try again.

The path that has once been trod,
Is never so rough to the feet;
And the lesson we once have learned,
Is never so hard to repeat.

Though sorrowful tears must fall,
And the heart to its depths be driven
With storm and tempest, we need them all
To render us meet for Heaven.

—*Selected*

MY NATIVE LAND

Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
"This is my own—my native land!"
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,
From wandering on a foreign strand?
If such there breathe, go, mark him well!
For him no minstrel's raptures swell.
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim,—
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentered all in self,
Living shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.

—*Sir Walter Scott*

QUEEN ESTHER

Long after the days of King Solomon, the king of the Persians wanted to choose a queen. He sent out his officers in all directions to bring to the palace the most beautiful maidens that could be found. When they were all assembled, Esther was by far the most beautiful, and she was chosen to be the queen.

Esther was an orphan girl who had been raised by her uncle. She was as pure and good as she was beautiful, and had never in all her life disobeyed her uncle, who loved and cared for her as if she had been his own child.

One day her uncle Mardochai overheard two wicked men making a plan to kill the king. He reported what he had heard, and the two men were put to death. Now, these two men had a friend at court named Aman, who was chief counselor to the king. From this time onward Aman hated Mardochai and sought for an opportunity to avenge the death of his friends.

The king gave orders that all the other servants in the palace should bow down before Aman and worship him as if he were a god. Mardochai refused to do this, because he was a Jew and worshiped only the one true God. This made Aman hate him still more. The death of Mardochai would no longer appease his anger, and he determined to be revenged on all the Jewish people in the kingdom.

One day he went to the king and said: "There is a people scattered through all the provinces of thy kingdom, and separated one from another, that use new laws and ceremonies. They despise the king's commands. And thou knowest that it is not well for thy kingdom that they should go unpunished. If it please thee, order that they may be destroyed and I will pay ten thousand talents into the treasury."

The king took the ring that he used from his own hand and gave it to Aman, the enemy of the Jews, and said to him:

"As to the money which you promise, keep it for yourself; and as to the people, do with them as seems good to you."

Aman called in the king's scribes and had them write letters to all the cities and provinces of the kingdom, and then Aman sealed these letters with sealing-wax and stamped them with the king's ring. He sent these letters by king's messengers throughout all the country.

In the letters orders were given that on an appointed day all the Jews should be killed, old men and women, and little children; not one was to be allowed to live. All their property was to be taken by those who killed them.

II

Now, when Mardochai heard these things, he rent his garments and dressed in sack-cloth and put ashes on his head. And he went through the streets of the city crying over the misery of his people. He went to the gate of the palace, but he could not go in, because no one was allowed to enter who was dressed in sack-cloth.

Throughout all the kingdom the Jews mourned and did penance and called on God to deliver them out of the hands of their enemies.

When Esther's maids came to her and told her that Mardochai was outside the gates dressed in sack-cloth and weeping bitterly, she was astonished. She sent her servants out with decent clothes to him, but he refused to accept them.

Then she sent for her chief steward and ordered him to go to Mardochai and learn why he behaved in this manner. Mardochai told him that Aman had promised to pay money into the king's treasury so as to have all the Jews destroyed, and that letters were already sent to all the provinces ordering the Jews to be killed. He also gave the steward a copy of the letter which he was to show to the queen. He told him to ask her to go to the king and beg of him to have mercy on her people.

When the chief steward told Esther all that Mardochai had said, she bade him return and say to Mardochai that, by an order of the king, any man, woman or child who comes into the king's court without being called for must be immediately put to death, unless the king shall hold out to him the golden scepter as a sign of mercy. And she added: "How, then, can I go to the king, who has not called me to him these thirty days?"

When Mardochai heard this, he sent this message back to Esther:

"Think not that thou mayest save thy life because thou art in the king's house, and allow all the Jews to be slain. If you fail to do your duty, God will find some other means of saving His people, and you and all belonging to you will perish. Do you not see that God has led you to the palace and made you queen so that you might be in a position to prevent this wrong?"

When Esther received this message she sent the steward to Mardochai, and bade him say to her uncle:

"Go and gather together all the Jews that are in the city, and let all of you pray for me. Let none of you eat or drink for three days and three nights, and I, with my maids, will fast and pray in like manner. And then I will go into the king without being called, and run the risk of being killed."

Mardochai did all that Esther had asked him to do. And Esther in like manner fasted and did penance. On the third day she dressed in her most beautiful robe, and entered the king's court without being bidden.

The king was sitting on his throne, and when he saw Esther he was very much surprised, but he was pleased with her beauty and with her courage, and he held out to her his golden scepter. She drew near and kissed the top of the scepter, and the king said to her:

"What wilt thou, Queen Esther? What is thy request? If thou shouldst ask even one-half of my kingdom, it shall be given to thee."

But she answered: "If it please the king, I beseech thee to come to me this day, and Aman with thee, to the banquet which I have prepared."

And the king said to his servants: "Call ye Aman quickly, that he may obey Queen Esther's will."

So the king and Aman came to the banquet which the queen had prepared for them. And after the dinner was finished, the king said to Esther again:

"What dost thou wish that I should give to thee? For even if thou shouldst ask half of my kingdom, it shall be given to thee."

And Esther answered: "This is my wish: If I have found favor in thy sight, and if it please thee to give me what I ask, let the king and Aman come to

the banquet which I shall prepare for them to-morrow, and then I will tell the king my wish."

Aman went away very happy. He did not know that Esther was a Jewess; neither did he suspect that Mardochai was her uncle. As he left the palace, he passed Mardochai, who took no notice of him. This made Aman angrier than ever.

When he reached home he called together his wife and friends, and told them of all the honors that the king had showered upon him. He told them that he was placed next to the king in power and honor, and that day he was the only guest who dined with the king and queen, and that he was invited to dine with them again on the following day. And then he told them how he was insulted by the Jew, Mardochai, as he left the palace, and declared that he would not know a minute's happiness while Mardochai lived.

His wife and his friends said to him: "Order a great gibbet to be built, fifty cubits high, and in the morning speak to the king and ask him to have Mardochai hanged upon it."

Aman was pleased with this advice, and ordered the gibbet to be built at once.

III

That night the king was restless and could not sleep, whereupon he sent for the records of the doings in his kingdom and commanded that they be read to him. Now, when they came to the place wherein it was written how Mardochai had discovered the plot against the king's life, the king commanded the reader to stop, and asked:

"What honor and reward hath Mardochai received for his fidelity?"

The servants answered: "He hath received no reward."

Then the king asked who was in the court without, for he heard a footstep. It was Aman on his way to ask the king to have Mardochai hanged on the new gibbet which he had built.

When the servant returned and told the king that Aman was waiting without, he said, "Let him come in." And when he entered, the king said to him:

"What ought to be done to the man whom the king desires to honor?"

Now, Aman thought the king meant himself, for was he not the king's special friend, who had dined with him at the queen's table the day before and who was invited to dine again that very day? And so he smiled and answered:

"The man whom the king desireth to honor ought to be clothed with the king's apparel and be set upon the horse that the king rides and have a royal crown upon his head. And the first of the king's princes and nobles should hold his horse, and, going

THE TRIUMPH OF MARDOCHAI

through the streets of the city before him, should proclaim to all the people: 'Thus shall he be honored whom the king desires to honor.' "

The king said to Aman: "Make haste and take the robe and the horse and do as thou hast spoken to Mardochai, the Jew, who sitteth before the gates of the palace, and beware that thou omit not any of the things which thou hast spoken."

Aman went immediately and did as he was commanded, and then returned to his house and told his wife and his friends what had happened to him. And while he was talking with them, a messenger came from the king commanding him to make haste to join the king at Queen Esther's banquet.

Now, when the dinner was over, the king was very much pleased with Esther for the beauty of her manners and for her noble thoughts, and he asked her what was her wish; and he assured her that no matter what it was, it would be granted to her.

Then Esther answered: "If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, and if it please thee, give me my life for which I ask and the life of my people

for which I implore. For we are given up, I and all my people, to be slain. This is bad enough, but the matter is made still worse, because it has been brought to pass by an enemy of our people who has placed all the blame for this wicked deed upon your royal highness."

Then the king asked: "Who is this man, and where does he get his power that he should do these things?"

And Esther answered: "It is this Aman that is our most wicked enemy."

Aman was so astonished that he did not know what to do with himself, and the king was so angry that he rose suddenly and went out into the garden to get control of himself. When he returned he found Aman prostrate on the ground at Queen Esther's feet, begging her to have pity on him.

The king ordered his soldiers to lay hold of Aman at once. Now, one of the servants asked the king to look out through the window at the gibbet which Aman had built and on which he was going to hang Mardochai. And the king ordered that Aman be hung upon this gibbet at once.

ESTHER ACCUSING AMAN—*Doré*

That very day the king sent for Mardochai the Jew, and conferred on him the position and the honor and the riches which had been Aman's, and he told him to have letters written to every town and province in the kingdom ordering that no one should injure the Jews.

Thus the courage and the confidence in God which adorned Esther were the means of saving her people from destruction and of covering her uncle and herself with glory.

TRUE GREATNESS

The fairest action of our human life
  Is scorning to revenge an injury;
For who forgives without a further strife
  His adversary's heart to him doth tie;
And 'tis a firmer conquest truly said
To win the heart, than overthrow the head.

If we a worthy enemy do find,
  To yield to worth, it must be nobly done:—
But if of baser metal be his mind,
  In base revenge there is no honor won.
Who would a worthy courage overthrow?
And who would wrestle with a worthless foe?

We say our hearts are great, and cannot yield:
  Because they cannot yield, it proves them poor:
Great hearts are task'd beyond their power but seld;
  The weakest lion will the loudest roar.
Truth's school for certain does this same allow,
High-heartedness doth sometimes teach to bow.

—*Lady Elisabeth Carew*

LESSONS FOR LIFE

When we yield to the desire for revenge, we make ourselves unhappy and offend God, and God will punish us for our wickedness.

When power is entrusted to any man, he must use it for the general good, and not for his own gratification.

God gives power to those whom he places in authority that they may do good to others; He gives them no right to do wrong to those under their authority.

Find these truths in the story of Esther.

Which of these truths do you find in the story of the Magic Ring?

Which of them do you find in the story of Moses?

Which of them do you find in the story of Joseph?

Which of them is illustrated in the story of William Tell?

Which of them is illustrated in the story of the Seven Black Imps?

Which of these truths is illustrated in the conduct of Caiphas and Pilate when Our Lord was brought before them?

PART III

GOD AND NEIGHBOR

Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice and all these things shall be added unto you.

Matt., VI, 33.

Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." Matt., V, 10.

"God beholds thee individually whoever thou art. 'He calls thee by thy name.' He sees thee and understands thee. He knows what is in thee, all thy own peculiar feelings and thoughts, thy dispositions and likings, thy strength and thy weakness. * * * Thou dost not love thyself better than He loves thee. Thou canst not shrink from pain more than He dislikes thy bearing it; and if He puts it on thee, it is as thou wilt put it on thyself, if thou art wise, for a greater good afterwards."

—*Cardinal Newman*

CHRIST OR DIANA—*Long*

DANIEL

There is not on earth a soul so base
But may obtain a place
In covenanted grace;
  So that this feeble prayer of faith obtains
  Some loosening of his chains,
And earnests of the great release, which rise
From gift to gift, and reach at length the eternal prize.

All may save self;—but minds that heavenward tower
Aim at a wider power,
Gifts on the world to shower.—
  And this is not at once;—by fastings gain'd,
  And trials well sustain'd,
By pureness, righteous deeds, and toils of love,
Abidance in the Truth, and zeal for God above.

—Cardinal Newman

At the court of King Darius there lived a man by the name of Daniel. He had been brought as a captive from Jerusalem to Babylon after a war that had been waged by the Medes and Persians against the Children of Israel.

Daniel feared and loved God and obeyed all His Commandments, and God blessed him and gave him great wisdom. He showed him in a vision the time and the circumstances of the coming of the Redeemer. It was from the writings of Daniel that

the Wise Men learned that the Saviour was to come and that a star was to announce Him.

Now, it seemed good to Darius, and he appointed over the kingdom a hundred and twenty governors, and he appointed three princes, of whom Daniel was one, to be over the governors and to receive their accounts.

Because the spirit of God was in Daniel, directing him in all that he did, he succeeded better than the other princes, and the king decided to place him alone over all the kingdom. This made the other princes angry and envious, and they gathered together to see if they could think of a plan by which to cause the fall of Daniel.

They searched all his records and spied on all that he did, but his life and his actions were so perfect that they could find no cause for suspicion. They said to themselves: "We shall find nothing against Daniel unless it be in something concerning the law of his God." Then the governors and the princes made a plot which they felt sure would cause the destruction of Daniel. The princes came to the king and said:

"Long live King Darius. All the princes of the kingdom and the governors and senators and judges have consulted together for the good of the kingdom and for the honor of the great King Darius. And they advise that an edict be published saying: Whosoever shall ask any petition of any god or man for thirty days, but of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.

"Now, therefore, O king, we pray thee to confirm this sentence and sign this decree. For what is decreed by the Medes and Persians may not be changed; nor may any man be allowed to transgress it."

King Darius, who had no suspicion of the wicked thoughts that were in the hearts of his counselors, signed the decree and sent it forth.

When Daniel heard of this decree, he went into his house, and opening the windows in his upper chamber toward Jerusalem, he knelt down three times a day. He adored and gave thanks to God, as he had been accustomed to do before. And when the princes, who had been watching him, found him praying and making supplication to God, they came and spoke to the king concerning the edict, saying:

"O king, hast thou not decreed that every man that should make a request to any of the gods or men for thirty days but to thyself, O king, should be cast into the den of lions?"

And the king said: "Such is the decree of the Medes and Persians which may not be violated."

Then the princes said: "Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judea, has disregarded this law and this decree that thou hast made, for three times a day he prays to God."

Now, when the king heard this he was very much grieved, because he loved Daniel and honored him for his many virtues. He sought all day to find some means by which he might save Daniel, but the princes reminded him that no law of the Medes and Persians could be changed, and so at last he gave orders that Daniel should be cast into the den of lions. And he said to Daniel:

"Thy God whom thou always servest will deliver thee."

And after Daniel had been cast into the lions' den, a stone was laid upon the mouth of the den and sealed with the king's own seal, so that no one

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN—*Rivière*

might open the den and injure Daniel. And the king went away to his house; but he could neither eat nor sleep because of his anxiety concerning his servant.

Very early the next morning Darius went to the lions' den weeping, and he cried out:

"O Daniel, servant of the living God, has the God whom thou always servest been able to deliver thee from the lions?"

And Daniel, from the depths of the lions' den, answered:

"O king, live forever; my God hath sent His

angel and hath shut up the mouths of the lions, and they have not hurt me. For as much as before Him justice hath been found in me; yea, and before thee, O king, I have committed no offense."

Then the king was exceedingly glad and commanded that Daniel should immediately be taken out of the den; and no hurt was found on him, because he had believed in his God.

At the king's order, the men who had caused Daniel to be cast into the lions' den were brought and cast into the lions' den; and they did not reach the bottom of the den before the lions caught them and broke all their bones and tore them to pieces.

Then King Darius wrote to all the people, tribes and tongues that dwelt in the whole earth, saying:

"Peace be unto you. It is decreed by me that in all my empire all men should dread and fear the God of Daniel, for He is the living and eternal God forever. And His kingdom shall not be destroyed and His power shall be forever.

"He is the Deliverer and Saviour, doing signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, and it is He who hath delivered Daniel out of the lions' den."

LESSONS FOR LIFE

God never deserts those who are faithful to Him and who put their trust in Him.

Envy and hatred recoil upon the heads of those who are guilty of these wicked sins.

Find these lessons in the story of Daniel.

In what other stories do you find these truths illustrated?

CONTENT AND DISCONTENT

Some murmur, when their sky is clear
And wholly bright to view,
If one small speck of dark appear
In their great heaven of blue;
And some with thankful love are filled,
If but one streak of light,
One ray of God's good mercy, gild
The darkness of their night.

—*Richard C. Trench*

ST. PETER

Princes to whom the Church was given,
Strong leaders in the war sublime,
And soldiers in the halls of Heaven,
Ye are the lamps that light all time.

After the Holy Ghost had descended upon the Apostles, all cowardice left them, and they went forth openly to preach to the people in the name of Jesus Christ. They went into the highways and byways preaching and baptizing, as they had been commanded, but they taught chiefly in the porch of the temple.

God showed His approval of the teaching of the Apostles by conferring upon them the power to work miracles. St. Peter, especially, performed such wonderful miracles that the people brought all those who were sick into the streets and laid them on beds, so that when Peter passed by his shadow might fall upon them and cure them.

The fame of these miracles spread rapidly. From day to day the number of people who listened to the Apostles increased, and multitudes from the

APOSTLES PREACHING THE GOSPEL.—*Doré*

neighboring cities brought their sick to Jerusalem to be healed by the Apostles.

The number of those who accepted the word of God and were baptized increased very rapidly. This filled the high priests with envy, and they had the Apostles arrested and thrown into prison. But during the night an angel of the Lord appeared, who opened the doors of the prison and said to the Apostles:

THE LIBERATION OF ST. PETER—*Murillo*

"Go to the temple and speak the words of life to the people."

The Apostles, obedient to the command of God, went into the temple early in the morning and taught as they had been commanded.

Now, the high priest called together the council and sent to the prison to have the Apostles brought before them for trial. But when the officers opened the prison they found no one there, and returning to the council of the high priest they said:

"We found the prison carefully locked and the keepers standing before the doors; but when we opened it, we found no one in it."

No one knew what had happened. At that moment an officer of the temple came into the council room and said:

"Behold, the men whom you put in prison are in the temple teaching the people."

Whereupon, officers were sent to arrest them and bring them before the council. And when they were standing before the high priest, he said to them:

"We commanded you that you should not teach

in the name of Jesus. And, behold! you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine; and you would make us guilty before the people of the death of this man."

But Peter and the other Apostles answered:

"We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers hath raised up Jesus, whom you put to death. He hath exalted Him with His right hand and made Him Prince and Saviour to bring repentance to Israel and remission of sins. We are witnesses of these things and to the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to all who obey Him."

When the high priest and the council heard these things they became very angry. But Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, who was respected by all the people, rose up and asked that the Apostles be removed from the council chamber. And after they had left the room, he said:

"Ye men of Israel, be careful what you do to these men, for you know how Theodas and Judas of Galilee, who falsely claimed to have a mission from God, were slain and their followers dispersed. And now I say to you, let these men alone; for if their work be of men, it will come to naught, but

if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it. Be careful that you do not fight against God."

And the council accepted this advice. However, they called the Apostles before them and scourged them, and then, commanding them to preach no more in the name of Jesus, they dismissed them.

The Apostles went forth from the council chamber rejoicing that they were found worthy to suffer something in the name of Jesus. And every day in the temple and from house to house, they taught and preached Jesus Christ.

LESSONS FOR LIFE

God's commands must be obeyed before the commands of men; for if we disobey God we lose Heaven, whereas the worst that man can do to us is to take away our earthly life.

If God is with us, we can do all things; if He is against us, all our efforts are vain.

Find these lessons in the story of St. Peter.

In what other stories do you find these lessons illustrated?

A SONG OF DAWN

St. Hilary

From heaven has fled the starry night,
And startled sleep has taken flight;
The rosy morn, uprising, spills
Her crystal light o'er vales and hills.

Soon as the earliest ray we see,
Our souls are lifted, Lord, to Thee;
Dear God, to Thee our prayers we bring;
To Thee rejoicing hymns we sing.

Lord, be our hearts and hopes renewed
In light and love and gratitude,
So may our deeds, illumed by Thee,
Worthy Thy love and glory be.

We praise Thee, Lord, forever more;
Thee, with the Son our souls adore,
And with the Spirit, three in one,
Reigning while endless ages run.

—*Tr. D. J. Donahoe*

THE CHRISTIAN SLAVE

Fabiola was a beautiful Roman lady. She was the only daughter of a very wealthy man named Fabius, who gratified all her wishes.

One evening, as she reclined on a couch, three slaves prepared her for dinner. Two of the slaves constantly flattered their mistress, vying with each other in saying what they thought would please her.

"How delighted I should be, most noble mistress," said the black slave, "if I could only be in the dining-room this evening as you come in to see the effect on your guests of this new cosmetic. I have worked a long time to make it as perfect as it is. I am sure nothing like it was ever before seen in Rome."

"As for me," said the Greek slave, "I would not hope for so great an honor. I should be satisfied to stand outside the door and see the effect of this wonderful silk dress. Nothing can equal its beauty. My work in making it was unworthy of the materials."

"And you, Syra," said Fabiola; "what would

you desire? Have you nothing of your own doing to praise?"

"Nothing to desire, noble lady," said Syra, "but that you may be always happy. I only did my duty, and that does not deserve praise."

Fabiola was not pleased, for she wanted to be flattered even by her slaves, and she said:

"One seldom hears a word of praise from your mouth, Syra."

"And what would it be worth coming from me?" was the reply. "You hear words of praise all day from the ladies and gentlemen whom you meet; and if you do not believe what they say, what must you think of what a poor slave would say?"

This answer made the Pagan lady angry, and she said:

"Have you yet to learn that you are my property? I have bought you at a high price that you might serve me as I please. I have as much right to the service of your tongue as to that of your arms. And if it pleases me to be praised and flattered by you, you shall do it whether you like it or not. The very idea of a slave having ideas of her own!"

"It is true," replied Syra, "that my life belongs to you, and so does all else that ends with life, such as my time, health and strength, my body and breath; all this you have bought with your gold. But I still have as my own what no wealth can buy."

"And, pray, what is that?" asked Fabiola.

"A soul," replied Syra.

"A soul?" echoed the astonished Fabiola, who never before heard any one say that a slave had a soul. "Pray, let me ask you what you mean by the word soul?"

"I mean that inward, living consciousness by which I feel and know that I have an existence among better things than those which surround me, and which makes me shrink from flattery and hate a lie. And knowing that I possess a soul, I can neither flatter nor lie."

"Who has taught you all this folly?" asked Fabiola. "I have read and studied for many years and I have come to the conclusion that all this talk about another life is but an idle dream. Do you, an ignorant slave, pretend to know better than your

mistress? Do you really believe that after death, when your body will be burned in a common pile with other slaves, that your soul will still live a life of joy and freedom?"

"Not all of me shall die," replied Syra. "I hope and intend to live after all that you say shall have been done to my body. And more than this, I believe and know that out of that pile of ashes there is a hand that will pick out each burned fragment of my body, and there is a power that will call to account the four winds of heaven and make each give back every grain of my dust that it has scattered. And I shall be built up once more in this, my very body, and I shall not be your slave, or the slave of anybody else, but free and joyous, and glorious, loving forever and being loved. This certain hope is in my heart."

"What!" exclaimed the astonished Fabiola. "Do you presume to claim equality with me? Come, tell me at once, and do not dare to disguise the truth: Do you or do you not think that you are better than I am?" and she sat upon the couch trembling with anger.

"Most noble mistress," said Syra, sweetly, "you are far superior to me in beauty, in wealth, in power, and in gifts of mind. But, if I must answer the truth, then I ask you whether a poor slave, who knows that she possesses a soul that will live forever and that her only true dwelling place is in Heaven and her only true Father God, can believe that she is inferior morally to any one? Can she believe that she belongs to a lower circle of thought than one who does not believe that she possesses anything that will live beyond the grave; anything that will outlive the pretty canary bird who beats his breast without hope of freedom against the bars of his cage?"

At this Fabiola's anger broke into a fury. She felt that she was insulted by her own slave, and grasping a dagger which she wore at her side, she struck at Syra and wounded her arm deeply.

In a moment Fabiola realized what she had done and was sorry for it. She said:

"Go! Go quickly to the nurse and have your arm bandaged; I did not mean to hurt you so."

As Syra turned to leave the room, she suddenly stood face to face with Agnes. She was going to speak, but Agnes took her hand and kissed it, and said:

"I have seen all. Meet me in the reception room as I go out."

When Fabiola looked up she turned crimson, for she feared that her little cousin had seen her anger and her cruel treatment of Syra.

"This is very kind of you, dear Agnes, to come at my sudden request, but I wanted you to accompany me to-night at dinner, where we are having some new guests. And you have come, as usual, in your snow-white dress, without jewel or ornament, as if you were every day a bride. But, good heavens! What is this? Are you hurt? Do you know that there is a big spot of blood on the bosom of your dress? Let me have it changed at once."

"Not for the world, Fabiola. It is the jewel, the only ornament I shall wear this evening. It is

St. Agnes—*Andrea del Sarto*

blood, and that of a slave, but it is nobler and more generous than your blood and mine."

From this Fabiola knew that Agnes had seen what had happened. And she said:

"Dear Agnes, do you wish to show all the world what a temper I have in chastizing a bold slave?"

"No, dear cousin; but I do wish to preserve this lesson of fortitude and of noble-mindedness which I have learned from a slave."

"What a strange idea! Indeed, Agnes, you make too much of these slaves. What are they?"

"They are human beings; members of the same family with ourselves; and if God, from whom our life comes, is our Father, He is also their Father, and they are our brothers and sisters."

"A slave my brother or sister, Agnes? The gods forbid! They are our property."

"Do not let us get into a discussion, dear Fabiola; but grant me a request."

"Any one within my power," replied Fabiola.

"Then you must allow me to purchase Syra. You will not like to see her about you again."

"You are mistaken, Agnes. I will master my

pride. I own that I now esteem her and admire her more than ever."

"But I think, Fabiola, that I could make her happier than she is."

"No doubt, dear Agnes. You have the power of making every one about you happy. Everybody in your house is always smiling and cheerful in the discharge of his duty. There seems to be no one who thinks of giving commands. If you were a Christian, and were exposed in the amphitheater, I am sure the wild beasts would nestle at your feet. But, come, it is time to go down to dinner."

After dinner was over, Agnes and her cousin Fabiola went to the reception room, where Agnes had asked Syra to meet her. When they reached the curtain that took the place of a door, they saw Syra waiting on a poor blind beggar girl. Syra had given this child her own dinner, and having brought water, she was washing her hands and feet. After this she dressed her hair, as if the poor creature had been her own child. And the beggar looked so happy and spoke so cheerfully that Syra lingered over her work to listen to the beautiful things the beggar was saying.

When Fabiola saw and heard this, her heart was touched. She never imagined that there could be such love as this between strangers, for she did not know what Christian charity meant. She drew back from the curtain and said to her cousin:

"Good night, dear Agnes; I must go to my room now. That girl, as you know, proved to me this afternoon that a slave may have a head; she has now shown me that she may also have a heart. I was surprised a while ago when you asked me if I did not love a slave. I think now I could almost love Syra. I am sorry that I agreed to part with her."

As Fabiola left, Agnes entered the room and said, laughingly: "So, Cecilia, I have found out your secret at last. This is the friend whose food you have always said was so much better than mine that you would never eat at my house. Well, if the dinner is not better, at any rate, I agree with you that you have met with a better hostess."

"Oh, don't say so, sweet lady," answered the blind girl. "You have plenty of chances to practice charity, but a poor slave can only do so by finding some one still poorer and helpless like me. That thought makes her food far the sweetest."

"You are right," said Agnes, "and I am glad you are present to hear the good news which I bring to Syra. It will make you happy, too. Fabiola has allowed me to become your mistress, Syra, and to take you with me. To-morrow you shall be free and a dear sister to me."

Cecilia clapped her hands with joy, and throwing her arms around Syra's neck exclaimed: "Oh, how good! How happy you will now be, dear Syra!"

But Syra looked troubled, and said: "Oh, good and gentle lady, you have been very kind to think so much about one like me, but I beg of you to let me remain as I am."

"But why do you wish to stay?" asked Agnes.

"Because," said Syra, "it is most perfect to remain with God in the state to which you have been called. Since God wants me to remain here, how can I wish to leave?"

"Well," said Agnes, "we can easily arrange that. I will not free you, and you shall be my bondwoman. That will be just the same."

"No, no," said Syra, smiling; "that will never

do. Our great apostle says to us: 'Servants, be subject to your masters in all fear. Not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.' I do not say that my mistress is cross, but you, noble lady Agnes, are too good and gentle for me. Where would be my cross if I lived with you? You do not know how proud and stubborn I am by nature, and I should be afraid of myself if I had not some pain and humiliation to suffer."

"Come to me, then, for my sake, if you will not for your own," said Agnes.

"No, no," said Syra; "whatever else you are, you never could be selfish. You know and love Fabiola, and I wish to stay with her to make a Christian of her."

"Do you hope for that?" asked Agnes.

"Yes," replied Syra; "it is my prayer day and night. It is my one thought in life. I will try to win her by patience and diligence; and when everything else fails, I have one thing left."

"And what is that?" asked both.

"To give my life for her conversion. I know that a poor slave like me has few chances of martyrdom. But be that as God pleases; I have placed my life in His hands for her soul. And, O dearest and best of ladies!" she exclaimed, falling on her knees, and bathing Agnes's hand with her tears, "do not come in between me and my prize."

"You have conquered, sister Syra," said Agnes. "Remain at your post. Such generous virtue must triumph."

Heart of Jesus! gentle Teacher,
We would learn of Thee,
Day by day, Thy sweetest lesson—
Silent Charity.

Teach our hearts to love that service,
Seen by none but Thee,
Holding fast the secret watchword:
Do and silent be.

Bid us act but for Thy glory,
That our lives may be
Ripened harvests for our reaping
In eternity.

Sr. Genevieve Todd

LESSONS FOR LIFE

The soul can never die. It is the most precious thing that God has given to us. If we save our souls and live forever with God in Heaven, it does not matter what we suffer in this world.

To please God and save our souls we must love our neighbor as ourselves.

The best thing we can do for our neighbor is to give him a good example by living truly Christian lives.

Find these lessons in the stories of the Christian Slave and St. Agnes.

Did these two noble girls imitate Our Lord's example?

Did they obey Our Lord's last message to us: "My little children, love one another as I have loved you"?

In what other stories do you find any of these lessons?

THE THREE SISTERS

A short time after Syra had refused to leave Fabiola, God bestowed a great grace upon her by calling her to the religious life.

Although Agnes was only twelve years old, the Pope permitted her to take the veil on the same day with Syra. As the day for their profession approached, these two holy souls were filled with joy at the thought of consecrating their lives to God.

At last the happy morning arrived. Mass was celebrated before daybreak for the faithful by the Pope himself. After Mass was over, the people left the chapel. Lucina and her son, Pancratius, the parents of Agnes, and Sebastian, alone remained.

The chapel was faintly lighted by the dawning light in the eastern sky. On the altar there burned large wax candles and around it were many beautiful gold and silver lamps.

The chair of St. Peter was placed before the altar and on it was seated the venerable Pope with a golden staff in his hand and a crown upon his head. Around him stood a number of priests and deacons.

The stillness was broken by the sound of sweet voices singing a beautiful hymn to Jesus.

O Jesus, crown of virgin choirs,
  Whom the sole Virgin bore,
Behold our needs and our desires;
  To thee our vows and prayers we pour.

Among white lilies walkest thou,
  Surrounded by a virgin band,
The bridegroom's glory on thy brow,
  The prizes in thy bounteous hand.

Wher'er thou goest, lo! the throngs
  Of virgins follow in thy way,
And sing to thee eternal songs
  And sacred hymns by night and day.

We bow before thy lofty throne;
Refine our souls and purify,
That we may know thee, Holy One,
And swift from all corruption fly.

Be honor, glory, power and praise
To God the Father and the Son,
Like glory to the Spirit raise,
Forever reigning, three in one.

As the hymn was ended, a procession, headed by priests and deacons, entered the sanctuary. The priests were followed by a number of consecrated virgins dressed in black. With them were the two postulants in snow-white garments.

When all the others had taken their places around the sanctuary, the two candidates, accompanied by professed sisters, who acted as bridesmaids, knelt at the feet of the Pope, who said to each of them: "My daughter, what dost thou seek?" And each replied: "I wish to receive the holy veil and to practice the sacred duties of the religious life under the direction of these chosen guides."

Then the Pope blessed them and said: "How happy you should be this morning, my beloved children. You are called while still on earth to lead the lives of angels and to follow in the footsteps of

Jesus and His mother until you reach your true home in Heaven. There, you will be received into the pure ranks of those chosen ones that follow the Lamb wherever He goeth.

"And you are happy above all others in this, that the only love your heart knows on earth will not fade as the years pass by, but will grow stronger and nobler throughout all eternity."

After this the Pope blessed the different parts of the religious habit, which was then immediately put on the candidates by their bridesmaids. Then the new religious laid their heads upon the altar to show that they offered their whole lives to God. A wreath of flowers was placed on the head of each of the newly-made brides of Christ.

They knelt at the foot of the altar with their hearts overflowing with love and gratitude, wondering how Jesus should have found them worthy of so great an honor.

They thought the ceremony was all over, and were much surprised when they heard the Pope ask: "My daughter, what dost thou seek?"

Before they had time to look up, the hand of

each was seized, and they heard the little blind girl, Cecilia, answering: "Holy father, to receive the veil of consecration to Jesus Christ, my only love on earth, under the care of these two holy virgins, already His happy brides."

When Cecilia's profession was finished and she was asked for the wreath of flowers with which she was to be crowned, she drew forth the wreath she had provided. It was a bare, thorny branch, twisted into a circle. As she offered it to the assistants she said: "I have no flowers to offer to my bridegroom, neither did He wear flowers for me. I am but a poor girl, and do you think my Lord will be offended if I ask Him to crown me as He was pleased to be crowned Himself? And, then, flowers represent virtues in those that wear them; but my poor heart has produced nothing better than these."

The poor blind girl did not see how her two bridesmaids tried to snatch the wreaths from their own heads to place on hers. A sign from the Pope stopped them, and the blind girl, filled with joy, was led forth in her crown of thorns.

THE DIVINE CALL

"The Master has come and calleth for thee."
John, XI, 28

The Master calls for thee.
Arise, my soul, and hasten to His feet,
Thy sorrow like the morning mist will flee,
There in His presence sweet.

'Tis He, thine only Lord,
He loving comes to be thine humble guest,
"Come unto me." — His sweet, consoling word,
"And I will give thee rest."

'Tis He, thy faithful friend,
Who longs to fold thee to His breast divine,
Who in His love would share unto the end
Each joy and grief of thine.

'Tis He, thy Love; no more,
O soul of mine, resist thy heavenly Spouse.
In grateful love, go plight Him o'er and o'er
Thine everlasting vows.

Go, sit thou at His feet
And ponder o'er the lessons of His heart.
Go, spend thy life in one Communion sweet,
Go, choose the "better part."

* * * * * * *

I'm thine, dear Lord, forever more
Whatever may befall,
And Thou art mine, my life, my Love,
My Jesus and my all.

—*Sr. Genevieve Todd.*

LESSONS FOR LIFE.

The greatest blessing that God can bestow upon any one is to call him to the religious life.

God frequently shows us our vocation in the disposition which he gives us.

If we forget self and all our narrow loves and think only of helping our neighbors to become pleasing in God's sight, God is calling us to a religious life.

We never can be happy unless we obey God's call.

Find these lessons in the story of The Three Sisters. Find them in the stories of The Christian Slave and St. Agnes. In what other stories of this book and of Religion, Third Book, do you find these same lessons?

Which of these lessons is found in the story of Little Fir?

A CHILD'S WISH

I wish I were the little key
That locks Love's Captive in,
And lets Him out to go and free
A sinful heart from sin.

I wish I were the little bell
That tinkles for the Host,
When God comes down each day to dwell
With hearts He loves the most.

I wish I were the chalice fair,
That holds the Blood of Love,
When every flash lights holy prayer
Upon its way above.

I wish I were the little flower
So near the Host's sweet face,
Or like the light that half an hour
Burns on the shrine of grace.

I wish I were the altar where,
As on His mother's breast,
Christ nestles, like a child, fore'er
In Eucharistic rest.

But, oh! my God, I wish the most
That my poor heart may be
A home all holy for each Host
That comes in love to me.

—*Father Ryan*

THE LITTLE MARTYR OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Jesus, Thy memory divine
To every heart is heavenly wine;
But sweetness more than sweetest things
Thy presence in the bosom brings.

Such gladness ne'er hath poet sung,
Such joy ne'er pleasured ear or tongue,
To man no dream so sweet e'er came,
Dear Son of God, as Thy blest name,

True hope of all repentant hearts,
What tender joy Thy love imparts!
Thou givest Thy seekers here below
Such bliss as only they can know.

O Lord, if we but claim Thy love,
Our souls are lifted from above,
And feel such wondrous happiness,
As tongue or pen can ne'er express.

Be still our joy and stay, dear Lord,
Our guide, our hope, our sweet reward;
Let praise and love and glory be
Sung to Thy name eternally.

—*St. Bernard*

There was a fierce persecution raging. Every Christian that could be found was dragged before the judges and condemned to death. The prison was full of Christians who were waiting for a martyr's crown.

After the priest had said Mass in the chapel at Agnes's house, he looked around to find some one who could be trusted to carry the Blessed Sacrament to those who were about to die for Christ.

Before any one had time to come forward, the young altar boy, Tarcisius, knelt at the priest's feet and stretched out his hands to receive the sacred trust. His face was as beautiful as an angel's in its innocence.

"Thou art too young, my child," said the priest, who was full of admiration for the noble courage of the boy before him.

"My youth, holy father, will be my best protection. Do not refuse me this great honor."

Tears stood in the boy's eyes and his cheeks glowed. He was such a picture of fervent courage that the priest could not refuse his wish. So he took the Divine Mysteries, wrapped them up carefully in a linen cloth, and then in an outer covering, and put them in the boy's hands, saying:

"Remember, Tarcisius, what a treasure is entrusted to thy feeble care. Avoid public places and keep safe God's sacred gifts."

"I will die rather than betray them," answered the boy, as he put the Blessed Sacrament in his bosom and with cheerful reverence started on his journey.

As he was passing the door of a fine house, the mistress, who had no children, saw him. She was struck with his beauty and with the sweetness of his face as he hastened along with his arms folded on his breast. She stepped out into the street before him and said:

"Stay one moment, dear child. What is your name and where do your parents live?"

"I am Tarcisius, an orphan boy," he replied with a bright smile, "and I have no home save one which you might not care to hear about."

"Then come into my house and rest. I wish to speak with you. Oh, that I had a child like you!"

"Not now, noble lady, not now. I have entrusted to me a most sacred duty and I must not delay a moment."

"Then promise me to come to-morrow. This is my house."

"If I am alive, I will," answered the boy with

a look which made him appear to the lady as a messenger from Heaven.

She watched him for some time, as he went on his way, and then she started to follow him. She soon heard cries and angry yells, and stopped until the noise had ceased. Then she went on in the hope of finding the boy.

In the meantime Tarcisius came into an open space, where boys just out from school were beginning to play.

"We just want one to make up the game," said the leader. "Here comes Tarcisius, whom I have not seen for an age. Come, Tarcisius, stop and take part in our game."

"I can't now," replied Tarcisius; "I am going on business of great importance."

"But you shall!" exclaimed the bully, laying hold of him. "I will have no sulking when I want anything done. Come, join us at once."

"I beg of you, let me go," said the poor boy.

"I'll do no such thing. What is that you are carrying so carefully in your bosom? A letter, I suppose. Well, it will not spoil by being delayed

for half an hour. Give it to me and I will put it where it will be safe while we play," and he snatched at the sacred treasure.

"Never, never!" answered the boy.

"I will see it!" said the bully. "I will know what this wonderful secret is." And he began to pull Tarcisius and kick him roughly, but the boy seemed indifferent to blows and kicks. He neither murmured nor hit back, but kept his hands crossed over his breast with a strength that astonished everybody.

"What is it; what can it be?" some one asked.

A well-dressed man passing by repeated, "What is it? It's a Christian ass bearing the Mysteries."

The crowd now fell upon the poor boy and knocked him senseless with heavy blows on his head and body. Blood flowed freely from his wounds, and Tarcisius fell to the ground with his hands still firmly crossed upon his breast.

The boys were about to seize him and tear him to pieces, when they suddenly felt themselves pushed aside, right and left, by a giant. Some of them were sent reeling to the other side of the street;

others were spun round and round, and the rest fled.

The officer had no sooner cleared the ground than he knelt beside the bruised and fainting boy and picked him up in his arms as tenderly as his mother could have done. He whispered to him:

"Are you much hurt, my poor Tarcisius?"

"Never mind me, Quadratus," answered the boy with a smile. "I am bearing the Divine Mysteries. Take care of them."

The soldier bore the boy in his arms with reverence, realizing that he was not only carrying a martyr, but also the King and Lord of Martyrs, Jesus Christ.

The child's head leaned in confidence on the soldier's neck, but his arms still guarded the sacred treasure. They had only gone a little way when they met a lady who stared at them in wonder. Then she drew closer and looked into the boy's face, exclaiming:

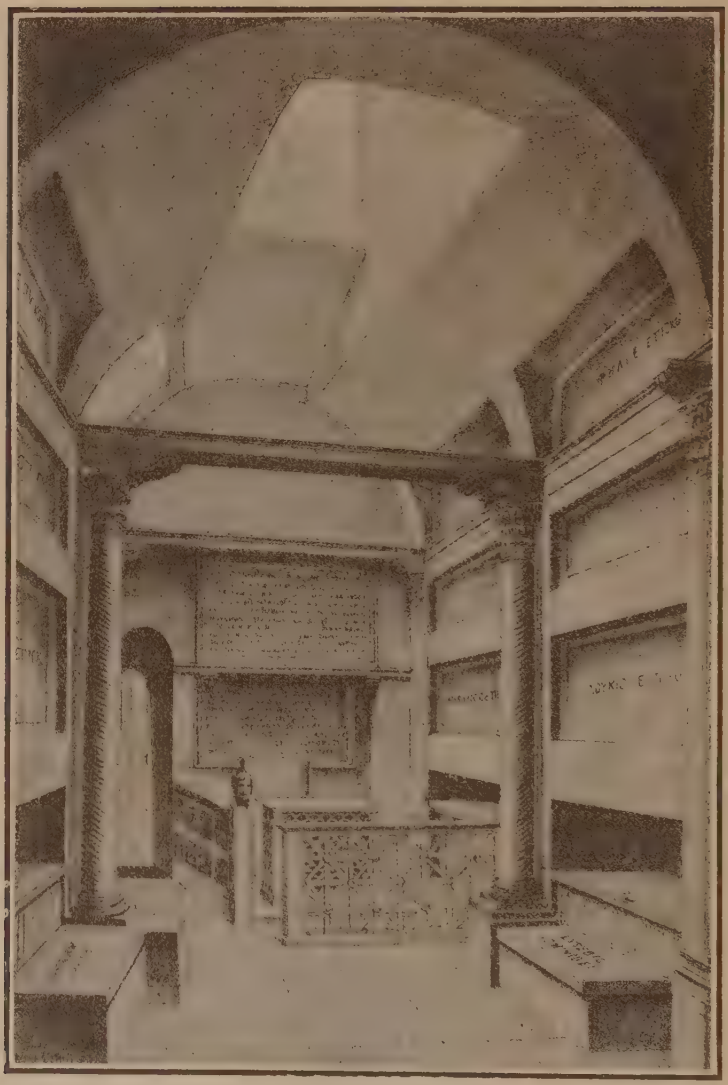
"Is it possible! Is this Tarcisius, whom I met a few minutes ago so fair and lovely? Who can have done this?"

"Madam," replied the soldier, "they have murdered him because he was a Christian."

The lady looked for an instant on the child's face. He opened his eyes and smiled on her and died. But from that look came the light of faith, and the lady made haste to become a Christian.

Quadratus carried the boy to the priest, who removed the Blessed Sacrament from his bosom. After this, Tarcisius was carried to the catacomb of St. Callistus, where he was buried in a niche in the wall. Pope Damasus had this inscription written above his tomb, where it may be seen to the present day:

Christ's secret gifts, by good Tarcisius borne,
The mob profanely bade him to display;
He rather gave his own limbs to be torn,
Than Christ's celestial to mad dogs betray.



CATACOMBS OF ST. CALLISTUS.
The burial place of the Popes in the Third Century.

LESSONS FOR LIFE.

God can confer no higher honor on anyone than to make him the bearer of divine grace to his fellowman.

A true Christian never counts the difficulty or the danger that may lie in his path when he is called upon to bring Our Blessed Lord to the dying.

Find these lessons in the story of The Little Martyr of the Blessed Sacrament.

JESUS IS GOD.

Jesus is God! The solid earth,
The ocean broad and bright,
The countless stars, like golden dust,
That strew the skies at night,
The wheeling storm, the dreadful fire,
The pleasant wholesome air,
The summer's sun, the winter's frost,
His own creations were.

Jesus is God! The glorious bands
Of golden angels sing
Songs of adoring praise to Him,
Their Maker and their King.
He was true God in Bethlehem's crib
On Calvary's cross, true God,
He who in heaven eternal reigned,
In time on earth abode.

Jesus is God! Alas! they say
On earth the numbers grow
Who His Divinity blaspheme
To their unfailing woe.
And yet what is the single end
Of this life's mortal span,
Except to glorify the God
Who for our sakes was man?

Jesus is God! Let sorrow come,
And pain, and every ill;
All are worth while, for all are means
His glory to fulfill;
Worth while a thousand years of life
To speak one little word,
If by our *Credo* we might own
The Godhead of our Lord!

Jesus is God! If on the earth
This blessed faith decays,
More tender must our love become,
More plentiful our praise.
We are not angels, but we may
Down in earth's corners kneel,
And multiply sweet acts of love,
And murmur what we feel.

—*Father Faber.*

A wicked spy, who had fallen in love with Agnes and wished to marry her, both because he loved her and because she was very rich, reported to the judge that she was a Christian. He did this in anger because Agnes refused to marry him and became a sister.

Fabiola went to visit Agnes in prison on the morning of her martyrdom. Agnes took one of Fabiola's hands in each of her own and crossed them on her own calm bosom. She looked into the face of her friend with great earnestness and said:

"Fabiola, I have one dying request to make of you. You have never refused me anything; I am sure you will not refuse me this."

"Do not speak like this to me, Agnes. You must now command me."

"Then promise me that you will immediately study the doctrines of Christianity. I know that you will believe them and become a Christian, and then you will no longer be to me what you are now"

"And what is that, dearest?" asked Fabiola.

"Dark, dark, dearest Fabiola. Over all your splendid gifts of mind and heart there hangs a cloud to my eyes. It is the gloomy shadow of death. Drive it away and all will be bright."

"I feel it, dear Agnes; I feel it. Standing before you I seem to be a black spot compared with your brightness. By becoming a Christian, shall I become like you?"

"Yes, Fabiola; you must pass through the stream that separate us. The waters of life shall flow over your body, and the oil of gladness shall preserve your flesh, and your soul shall be washed clean as snow, and your heart shall be softened as the babe's. From that bath you will come forth a new creature, born again to a new and immortal life."

At this moment the soldiers approached to lead Agnes before her judge.

"Hark!" exclaimed Agnes, with joy. "They come, they come! You hear the tramp of the soldiers' feet. To me they are the bridesmen coming to summon me. I see above the white-robed bridesmaids riding on the clouds of the morning and

FABIOLA—*Henner*

beckoning me forward. Yes, my lamp is trimmed and I go forth to meet the Bridegroom. Farewell, Fabiola. Weep not for me. Oh, that I could make you feel as I do the happiness of dying for Christ. God bless you." Agnes made the sign of the cross on Fabiola's forehead, and the two friends embraced for the last time on earth.

Agnes was led into the open forum and stood fearlessly before her judge. A multitude of curious people were standing around to witness the scene.

"Why is she not handcuffed?" asked the judge of the soldier.

"She does not need it, she walks so readily; and she is so young," answered the guard.

"But she is as stubborn as the oldest of them. Put handcuffs on her at once," commanded the judge.

The guard picked out the smallest pair of handcuffs he had and put them on her, but Agnes, with a smile, shook her hands and they fell off. Turning to Agnes, the judge said:

"Agnes, I pity you because of your youth and your high station and the bad education you have

received. Think better of it while you have yet time. Give up the wicked doctrines of Christianity and obey the emperor's command by sacrificing to the gods."

"It is useless," replied Agnes, "to tempt me longer. I despise your false gods and can only serve the one true living God."

Then, lifting her eyes to Heaven, she said:

"Eternal Ruler, open wide the gates which were so long closed to man. Blessed Christ, call to Thee the soul that loves Thee. I am consecrated to Thee by the vows of religion, and now I offer myself to Thee in the hope of receiving a martyr's crown."

"I see I am only wasting time," said the judge, and he ordered that Agnes should be beheaded at once.

When Agnes heard this, she raised her eyes to Heaven, and then calmly knelt down. With her own hands she drew forward her hair over her head and exposed her neck to the sword.

The soldier hesitated for a moment. The child knelt in her white robes with her head bent forward and her arms crossed upon her bosom. She

looked like some beautiful flower bent with its golden blossom.

The angry judge rebuked the soldier for his delay. The man wiped his eyes with the back of his hand, and then his sword flashed, and the next moment the flower and the stem lay beside each other on the ground. One might have thought that Agnes was prostrate in prayer but for the fact that her white dress was dyed crimson.

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

My God! how wonderful Thou art!
Thy majesty, how bright!
How beautiful Thy mercy-seat
In depths of burning light!

Yet I may love Thee, too, O Lord,
Almighty as Thou art,
For Thou hast stooped to ask of me
The love of my poor heart.

No earthly father loves like Thee,
No mother half so mild
Bears and forbears, as Thou hast done,
With me, Thy sinful child.

Only to sit and think of God,
Oh, what a joy it is!
To think the thought, to breathe the Name,
Earth has no higher bliss!

—Father Faber

THE MARTYR'S SON

Pancratius was a noble boy, the only son of a martyred father. His mother, St. Lucina, had kept for him some of his father's blood, which he constantly wore in a locket around his neck.

One day Pancratius was found by a Roman officer cheering the Christian prisoners. When he was brought before the court the judge said to him:

"Insolent youth, you have had the impudence to disobey the divine emperor; but in spite of this, I will have mercy on you if you will now offer sacrifice to the gods. Show your piety and your wisdom, for you are only a child."

Pancratius made the sign of the cross and calmly replied:

"I am the servant of Christ, whom I acknowledge by my mouth, hold firm in my heart, and constantly adore. The youth which you see in me has the wisdom of grey hairs, if it worships the true God. But your gods, with those who adore them, are destined to eternal destruction."

"Strike him on the mouth for his blasphemy and beat him with rods!" exclaimed the angry judge.

"I thank thee," replied the noble youth, "that I thus suffer some of the same punishment that was inflicted upon my Lord."

The judge then sentenced him, with the other holy martyrs, to be exposed to the wild beasts.

The mob howled with delight and hatred as they accompanied the Christians back to prison.

Two days afterward a great many Christians were led forth to feed the wild beasts. Lucina and Sebastian were waiting by the way as the prisoners were led forth. As Pancratius passed by he dropped on his knees before his mother, and, taking her hand, kissed it affectionately, saying:

"Bless me, dear mother, in this hour that you have so long looked forward to."

"My child," said Lucina, "look up to Heaven, where Christ and the saints await you. Fight the good fight for your soul's sake and show yourself faithful and steadfast in your Saviour's love. Remember your father, also, whose precious relic you wear upon your neck. Its price shall be doubled in my eyes before many hours."

"March on; let us have no more of this fooling!" called the guard, striking Pancratius with his club. Sebastian pressed the hand of his friend and whispered in his ear:

"Courage! dearest boy. May God bless you! I shall be close behind the emperor. Give me a last look there and your blessing."

After all the other martyrs had been torn to pieces by the wild beasts, Pancratius was led into the center of the arena. He was kept for the last in the hope that the sight of others suffering would shake his courage, but it had just the opposite effect.

He stood with his arms stretched in the form of a cross, praying to God. He never moved a muscle while the wild beasts rushed toward him, furiously, as if they would tear him to pieces. Just before they reached him they shut their mouths and slunk away. There seemed to be a charmed circle around the young hero which the animals dared not pass.

A furious bull was then let loose upon the boy. He dashed madly forward, with his head bent down, and then stopped suddenly, as though he had struck

against a wall. He pawed the ground, scattered the dust around him, and bellowed fiercely.

"Provoke him, you coward!" roared the emperor.

Pancratius awoke as from a trance, and waving his arms, ran toward his enemy. But the savage brute, as if a lion had been let loose upon him, turned and ran toward the entrance, where he met his keeper and tossed him on his horns.

One of the crowd shouted: "He has a charm around his neck! He is a sorcerer!"

The whole multitude took up the cry. The emperor shouted: "Take that amulet from your neck or it shall be torn off."

"Sire," replied Pancratius, "it is no charm that I wear, but a relic of my father, who in this very place made the same confession which I now humbly make. I am a Christian, and for love of Jesus Christ, God and man, I gladly give my life. Do not take from me this only legacy which I have left to another richer than I received it. Try once more. It was a panther which gave my father his crown. Perhaps it will do as much for me."

The voice of the young hero rang like sweet music

through the colosseum. The crowd was moved at the sight of such courage. Pancratius feared for a moment that he would miss his crown, and the tears started to his eyes, as he stretched forth his arms once more in the form of a cross and called out:

"To-day, oh, yes, to-day, most Blessed Lord, is the appointed day of Thy coming. Thy power has been shown enough in me to them that believe not in Thee; now show Thy mercy to me, who believe in Thee and love Thee."

"The panther!" roared the crowd; "the panther!"

Instantly the beast was let loose. He frisked about the arena for a few minutes before he saw the boy. The panther crawled on his belly until he came to the right distance for a spring. At last he gathered himself up and sprang through the air, lighting with his mouth and feet on Pancratius's breast. The martyr brought one hand to his mouth, and looking up to Sebastian with a smile, waved his arm toward him and fell, and in a minute all was over.

CHRISTIAN MARTYRS—*Doré*

MORNING HYMN

St. Ambrose

Unvanquished soul, brave saint of God,
  True follower of the Martyred Son,
In Christ's bright footsteps thou hast trod,
  And in His glorious triumph won.

Lift up to God thy prayers for us,
  That He may purge our sins away,
May change our evil will, and thus
  Up-raise our souls to endless days.

The chains that bound thee to the earth
  Are stricken from thy sacred feet,
Break thou our chains; thy sacred worth
  Can gain the need of mercy sweet.

To God the Father glory be
  The same unto the sole-born Son,
And Heavenly Paraclete, to Thee
  Forever reigning three in one.

—Tr. by D. J. Donahoe.

Sebastian had been heard encouraging Marcellus on the day of the martyrdom. He was accused of being a Christian to the emperor, who refused to believe it.

"Sebastian is my best officer. The oldest who survive him shall be called ungrateful men, and there were ever hellhounds upon a Christian!"

At this, Sebastian stepped forth and said: "I shall spare you all trouble in the matter, for I am a Christian and I glory in the name."

The emperor nearly died of rage. He shouted and raged, and called the others many vile names he could think of.

Sebastian remained perfectly calm. When the emperor finished speaking he said:

"Listen to me, my royal master. It may be that we have time. I have said that I am a Christian, and in this you have your best example. If you want a guard around you of men who will spill their last drop of blood for you, get Christians. You

have spilled half their blood; they will gladly spill the other half for you."

The emperor would not listen to him, but called him a coward and traitor, and ordered that he be taken to a secret place and shot to death with arrows, for he feared that the multitude would take his side.

The emperor ordered a company of black savages to carry out the sentence. These men tied the officer to a tree and tortured him by shooting as many arrows into him as they could. At last Sebastian fainted from loss of blood and was left for dead. His body was carried away by Christians, who were delighted to find his heart still beating, and they nursed him back to life.

One morning, some weeks after this, as the emperor was leaving the palace, Sebastian, pale and covered with wounds, appeared at a window in the second story, and called out: "Maximian!" in a hollow voice, that sounded as if it came from the grave.

"Who are you, sirrah, that makest so free with your emperor's name?" asked the tyrant, as he turned round and looked up at the window where Sebastian stood.

MARTYRDOM OF ST. SEBASTIAN—*Il Sodoma*

"I come from the dead to warn you that the day of wrath and vengeance is at hand. You have spilt the blood of God's saints upon the pavements of this city. You have cast their holy bodies into the river. You have pulled down God's temples and profaned His altars and stolen the property of the poor. For these and all your wicked crimes God has judged you, and His wrath will soon overtake you and you shall die a most cruel death, and God will give His church an emperor after His own heart. And your memory shall be accursed and hated throughout the whole world to the end of time. Repent while you have yet time and ask forgiveness of God in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified and whom you have persecuted."

There was breathless silence while Sebastian pronounced this judgment upon the emperor. Maximian seemed struck dumb for a minute. Then his anger broke forth, and he commanded his soldiers to drag Sebastian before him and to beat out his life with clubs.

VESPER HYMN

St. Ambrose
(From the Breviary)

O God, of all Thy host the king,
The crown, the prize, the hand that stays,
Absolve from stain Thy flocks, who sing,
And sound abroad Thy martyr's praise.

All joys of earth to Him were nought,
The flattering cup of pleasure seemed
But bitter gall; he only sought
The ways wherein Thy glory beamed.

The pangs of death He bravely bore,
He felt Thy presence in all pain;
Freely, dear Christ, did He outpour
His blood, Thy holy light to gain.

We bow before Thee, pitying Lord,
We sing His glory for Thy praise;
Hear us and bring the sweet reward;
Give pardon and our souls upraise.

All praise and love and glory be
To God the Father and the Son,
And holy Paraclete, to Thee,
While everlasting ages run.

—Tr. by D. J. Donahoe

LESSONS FOR LIFE

"I am the Lord, thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them. I am the Lord, thy God."

We should take more care of our souls than of our bodies, for what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

We prove our love and loyalty to God by obeying his commandments in all things and by being willing to die any death rather than disobey our Heavenly Father.

THE CONVERSION OF CONSTANTINE

On the third day after Our Lord was buried He rose gloriously from the tomb. In like manner, after the Christian Church had been buried for three hundred years in the catacombs, Our Lord, through the conversion of Constantine, brought it up triumphant into the light of day.

THE CROSS APPEARING TO CONSTANTINE—*Giulio Romano*

The conversion of Constantine happened in this way: One day when he was marching with his army against his enemies, Constantine saw in the heavens a bright cross, with these words in letters of fire under it: In this sign thou shalt conquer. He had a banner made immediately with the cross and the words which he had seen in the heavens painted on it. This banner was carried before his army and brought him victory over all his enemies.

In gratitude to God for this victory, Constantine ordered the persecutions of the Christians to cease throughout the Roman empire and forbade the worship of false gods. He protected the Christians against their enemies and gave them positions of trust and honor in the empire.

It was no longer necessary for the Christians to hide from their enemies or to go down into the catacombs to assist at Mass, but they continued to visit the tombs of the saints and the martyrs on their feast days for nearly a hundred years.

Constantine built many splendid churches in God's honor. He built a church over the tomb of St. Peter and another church to mark the spot where St. Paul had suffered martyrdom.

St. Helena, the mother of the emperor Constantine, became a Christian and a great saint through the influence of her son. She built many churches in the empire, and although very old when Constantine became master of the Holy Land, she traveled to Jerusalem to seek for the cross on which Our Saviour had been crucified.

The enemies of Christ had hidden the cross on which He died and also covered up the tomb in which he had been laid. God revealed to St. Helena the place where the cross was hidden. When she found it, there were two other crosses with it, but God helped her to discover which was the true cross.

There was at that time in Jerusalem a noble lady who was at the point of death. The three crosses were brought to her bedside. The first two crosses she touched produced no effect, but the moment she touched the true cross, she was completely cured.

Before St. Helena left the Holy Land she built two beautiful churches, one in Bethlehem, over the cave in which Jesus had been born, and another on the spot from which Our Lord ascended into Heaven.

LESSONS FOR LIFE.

Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus became man to show us the way to heaven. The way He showed us is the way of the cross.

We must show our loyalty to God and the strength of our love for Him by suffering for His sake before we are worthy to associate with Jesus and the saints in heaven.

God, in His own good time, delivered the Children of Israel from the cruelty of their enemies; and He delivered the early Christians from the cruelty of their persecutors. God always comes to the aid of the oppressed and He always punishes the cruelty of the oppressor.

A HYMN TO THE HOLY CROSS

St. Bonaventure

Would'st thou dwell in joy abounding,
All thy life with light surrounding,
  Make the cross thy constant care;
On the rood of thy Redeemer
Be thy soul an ardent dreamer,
  Bear it with thee everywhere.

Be thou toiling, be thou sleeping,
Be thou smiling, be thou weeping,
  Deep in grief or ecstasy;
Be thou coming, be thou going,
Pale with pain, with pleasure glowing,
  Let the cross thy comrade be.

Every sin and every sorrow,
Every ill that life can borrow,
  In the cross will gain surcease;
In the cross, though sore and grieving,
He that humbly seeks relieving,
  Findeth refuge, findeth peace.

'Tis the open door of Heaven,
Whence the streaming light was given
  To the saints to conquer shame;
'Tis the world's eternal healing,
When the Lord, His mercies dealing,
  Worketh wonders to His name.

* * * * * * * * *

Saviour, on the cross extended,
Be my soul with grace amended,
  Never more to mourn thy pain;
Feel the tortures that efface thee,
And with prostrate soul embrace thee,
  On the cross where thou art slain.

—*Tr. by D. J. Donahoe.*